WITHDRAWN

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WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE,"

&c. &c. &c.

'Come all you likely lads that has a mind for to range,
Into some foreign country, your situation for to change;
In seeking some new pleasures we will altogether go,
And we'll settle on the banks of the pleasant Ohio.

Come all you girls from New England that are unmarried yet,
O come along with us, and young husbands you shall get;
For there's all kinds of game besides the buck and doe,
To hunt with dog and rifle all on the Ohio."

Ballad.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE READER.

GOETHEAN LIBRARY Society

The devotees of sects and parties are exceedingly prone to imagine that every book, whatever may be its nature or object, is intended to operate in favour of or against their cherished doctrines or policy, and to test its opinions and sentiments by that standard alone. Such a rule, applied to fictions more especially, is calculated to put a tyrannical restraint on an author in the delineation of characters, as well as in detailing the sentiments and language naturally growing out of their particular habits, manners, and situations. Having conceived a character, it should be his aim to make it act and talk as such a person might naturally be supposed to do in similar circumstances. But we think he ought not to be held responsible for this any farther than probability and the decorums of life are concerned. Neither, as it appears to us, is he justly chargeable with hostility to any particular class, or profession, or sect, if he should happen to exhibit a character for the purpose of exposing their occasional excesses or absurdities. All we conceive a writer justly responsible for, in this point of view, are those sentiments and opinions he puts forth when he appears in his own proper person, and makes his bow to the reader. Thus, for instance, the little exhibitions of hostility to the Yankees occasionally introduced in the following work are given as characteristic of the feelings and prejudices of those to whom they are ascribed, and not as the sentiments of the author. So also with regard to the scene in Philadelphia, which is simply an exhibition of what it is supposed would naturally be the

feelings of a sagacious slave in the situation and under the circumstances described. The author yields to none in respect for the motives of those who are sincerely anxious to rid this country of the embarrassments of slavery; and none more heartily wishes the thing were possible, at a less risk to the happiness of both master and slave.

The great aim of the author has been to combine an important moral, with the interest of a series of incidents, and sketches of scenery, character, manners, and modes of thought and expression, such as he knows or imagines exist, or have existed, in particular portions of the United States. The story professes no connexion with history, and aspires to no special chronological accuracy; though it is believed that sufficient regard has been had to truth in this respect to give it the interest of something like reality. For very many of his ideas of the great Mississippi Valley the author is under particular obligations to the "Recollections" of the Rev. Timothy Flint, which contain by far the most picturesque description of that remarkable region which has ever fallen under his observation. This work has not met its deserts, and he should be highly gratified if this passing notice served in any way to call the public attention to its interesting details.

New-York, May, 1832.

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A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"The dark and bloody ground."

Who that hath ears to hear hath not heard of "Old Kentucky," which, having now arrived at the age of almost forty years, is entitled to assume the honours of a patriarch among the young fry of empires springing up like mushrooms in the vast valley of the great father of waters? Its early history is a romance; its growth a miracle; its soil a garden; its women half angel, half heroine; and a portion of its men, as hath been credibly asserted, half horse, half alligator; to which has lately been added a third ingredient, in compliment to those monstrous productions of the genius of Fulton that now float on the rivers of the west, smoking like volcanoes, and scattering showers of fire, to wit, "a small sprinkling of the steamboat."

Less than seventy years ago there breathed not a single white man within its wide limits. In that short period, which scarcely comprises the life of a single individual, the face of the earth and the face of man have undergone a total change in this land of wonders. The wild exuberance of nature has given place to the rich products of

human labour; the wild animals of the forest have been superseded by peaceful flocks and herds; and the wild Indian has retired before that destiny which pursues him everywhere. Nothing but the rivers, the mountains, and the traditions, remain to attest the truth of the picture given by the early adventurers to this rich, romantic region. The nations of hunters, the wandering kings of the woods, who once claimed dominion over the deep, dark forests, and the beasts that inhabited them, and which might be termed, in truth, their only constant occupants, have by degrees disappeared, after a struggle of half a century, so keen, so extensive, so bloody and revengeful; so full of peril, suffering, and disasters; so fatal to the red man and the white, that this smiling, fruitful region, now the abode of almost a million of prosperous people, obtained, and still retains, in the traditions of past times, and in the memory of the old surviving settlers, the ominous, melancholy appellation of "THE DARK AND BLOODY GROUND."

The free, daring, and adventurous life of the early settlers in this land of promise, gave to themselves and their posterity a character of enthusiasm, vivacity, courage, hardihood, frankness, and generosity, which in some respects distinguishes them from the rest of mankind. Reared in the midst of dangers, and residing at a distance from each other; possessing in general large estates and numerous slaves; seeing few equals, and recognising no superiors; accustomed to think and act for themselves; their characters have a primitive energy, a singularly bold, fresh, and original cast. The settled forms and opinions, which have been adopted without inquiry, and followed as a matter of course by the older states have in a

great measure given place to a code of their own, originating in their early peculiar situation and circumstances. Their ideas partake of a strong infusion of poetical exaggeration; they speak on a large scale, and know none of the degrees of comparison but that of the superlative; their passions are far more in want of the bridle than the spur; and the popular language of the boatmen is a singular compound of tropes, figures, and metaphors, all drawn from, or having allusion to, their early modes of life, and the scenes and occupations to which they are most accustomed.

Nurtured in the wilds, in the midst of all the grand features of nature, and familiar with dangers, or at least the recent recollection of dangers, —accustomed from their youth upwards to hear the surviving pioneers of the west relate the hardships and sufferings they encountered, endured, and overcame, when they stood alone in the wilderness, watched, waylaid, and beset in secret by cunning and revengeful savages,—they acquired an habitual consciousness of the presence of perpetual perils, and learned to look death and tortures in the face without flinching. The result of their peculiar situation, habits, and modes of thinking has been a race of men uniting a fearlessness of danger, a hardy spirit of enterprise, a power of supporting fatigues and privations, an independence of thought, which perhaps were never associated with the pursuits and acquirements of civilized life in any other country than the United States.

This is, indeed, the great peculiarity of that newest of all possible worlds, called the Western Country. Nowhere else will be found that union of apparent incongruities which exists in this remarkable region. Nowhere else do we find in log-

cabins, in the midst of primeval forests, and beyond the reach of all social intercourse, women whose manners were formed in the drawing-room, and men who have figured in the great world as warriors, statesmen, and orators. The tale we are about to relate connects itself with the early history of this vast and growing empire of the west.

CHAPTER II.

A genuine Tuckahoe.

CUTHBERT DANGERFIELD, or, as he was commonly called (for every second man you meet with in this country has a title to a certainty), Colonel Dangerfield, was a Virginia gentleman—a regular Tuckahoe—whose family originally came over with Captain John Smith "the conqueror," and had resided for several generations on James River, in the neighbourhood of Turkey Island, below the beautiful city of Richmond. His plantation was large enough to have entitled him in Germany to at least half a vote in the diet; the number of his subjects, *alias* slaves, equal to those of a Russian boyar; and his spirit was that of a prince; taking it for granted that, agreeably to the old mode of comparison, the spirit of a prince is much more liberal than that of a gentleman.

At the period of which we speak, Turkey Island and the shores of James River, on either side, as far down as James Town, the cradle of our New World, were embellished by the seats of a great number of the ancient gentry of Old Virginia. It was here that the Randolphs, the Byrds, the Pages, the Carters, the Harrisons of Berkeley and Brandon, together with divers others equally hospitable, kept open house to all comers, rich and poor; and no stranger of any pretensions to good breeding ever declined a visit without manifest danger of undergoing a defiance, or laying himself open to

a suspicion of being a horse-stealer, or a fugitive from justice. Never were they so happy as when their houses were filled with visiters, and it is on record that strangers sometimes forgot themselves while enjoying their hospitality, and fancied themselves at home. Such was their horror of formal visits and formal invitations, that to this day there is a coolness between two families of these parts, which arose from an ancestor of one of the houses having once left his card at the mansion of the other. It was held a mortal offence to good neighbourhood to send notice of a visit, and no man considered himself welcome if he went on an invitation. If Randolph of Turkey Island thought his neighbour Dangerfield on the opposite shore delayed his visit too long, he caused the old black herald to sound his horn to summon him to the field or the table; and the consequence of neglect or disobedience in answering it would have been a mortal feud, enduring even unto the fourth generation.

Never were there people so rich with so little money. Plenty, nay, profusion, reigned all around them; yet many lived, as it were, by anticipation. They were almost always beforehand with their means, and the crops of the ensuing year were for the most part mortgaged to supply the demand of the present. They feared nothing but a bad season for tobacco, a deed of trust, and a Scotch merchant. They were a high-spirited race, among the best specimens of aristocracy in modern times; but they have almost all disappeared from their ancient possessions. Industry and economy, when not counteracted by laws and institutions to prevent their otherwise inevitable result, will always, sooner or later, effect a trans-

fer of property from the rich to the poor.) Here and there, however, one of these ancient lords of the soil still maintains his state along the shores of James River; and we have yet on our palates the relish of some of the sacred relics of the old Madeira which is still dispensed with open hand at their hospitable boards.

Colonel Dangerfield was rich in lands and slaves; but what products of lands or human labour can supply the demands of careless prodigality, whose perpetual drains will at length convert the richest soil into the sands of the desert? Your tobacco is a sore devourer of the juices of the earth, and too many crops in succession will exhaust it, so that it will be incapable of producing any thing but weeds and sumack for years. The colonel kept open house, and his necessities ran him so hard, that he ran in debt to the Scotch merchant two years in anticipation. To meet these new difficulties, he ran his land still harder, extended his tobacco-fields, repeated his crops on the same soil, until at length it gave up the ghost, and, like an over-cultivated intellect, became incurably barren.

The Scotch merchant was reasonably patient for two, or rather three, special reasons. He was on the whole a good-natured and liberal man except in small matters; he knew that to press a planter too zealously for the payment of his debts would be to lose the business of all the others, who would rise up and make common cause against such ungentlemanly avidity; and, moreover, he was aware that, according to the ancient law of the Old Dominion, there was no way of getting hold of real estate except by a deed of trust given voluntarily by the possessor. For

these reasons, his patience lasted rather longer than might otherwise have been expected.

But the patience of a creditor is nothing compared with that of a debtor. The one is a mere hack-horse, that breaks down at the first heat; the other a full-blooded racer—an *Eclipse*, a *Henry*, or a *Bonnets of Blue*—which, like Old Virginia herself, "never tires." The merchant at length got out of patience, and began to hint at a deed of trust,—infamous words and outrageous to the ear of a planter! The colonel challenged the Scotch merchant for insulting him with such a proposal; but the latter answered, like a reasonable man, that if he would only pay him his money, he would fight him afterwards with great pleasure. But it was rather more agreeable to a debtor to liquidate his debts with a bullet than for a creditor to be paid after that fashion. From that time forward he dunned the colonel by every post, which, however, in justice to the merchant, ran only once a week.

Some men don't mind being dunned every day; they become accustomed to it in time, and attain to an extraordinary dexterity in the invention of excuses. But Colonel Dangerfield was not one of these; he could not invent a falsehood for the life of him, and, if he could, he would never have condescended to utter one. The situation of his affairs, which gradually grew worse and worse, and the importunities of his creditor, which daily became more pressing, worried him to the soul. He lost his spirits, and, with them, all relish for social enjoyment; he became moody, testy, abstracted, and abstained from all his usual amusements within doors and without. All at once, however, he seemed to rally again. A notice ap-

peared in the public papers, under the signature of a noted gentleman sportsman, offering to run his imported gray mare Lady Molly Magpie, four mile heats, at the next fall meeting, against all Virginia, for any sum from one to twenty thousand pounds, old currency. Colonel Dangerfield pricked up his ears; he had a famous horse yclept Barebones, who had long reigned lord of the Virginia course, and won him so much money, that he might have paid the Scotch merchant if he had not lost it all in betting on bay fillies, bright sorrels, and three year olds of his own breeding, all of whom had the misfortune to bolt, break down, or be distanced, to his great astonishment and mortification. He determined to accept the challenge, after which, as is usual with all wise men when they have made up their minds, he went to consult his wife on the matter.

Mrs. Dangerfield was one of the choicest ornaments of the sex; a saint in her closet, a matron in the nursery, a lady in her kitchen as well as in her parlour; delicate, sensible, accomplished in all that becomes a woman; a watchful mistress, a careful, mild, yet firm mother; a wife who, without attempting to govern, aimed only to control the imprudence or overrule the foibles of her husband by modest firmness, in urging arguments better than he could oppose. Nine times in ten the colonel fell into a passion at being thwarted in his wishes or whims, and flounced away in disgust; but he seldom failed to return in due season, and, as Mrs. Dangerfield had the good sense and forbearance to refrain from renewing the subject, would come over to her opinion with something like the following salvo:—

"My dear, upon reflection, I think I did not

quite understand you this morning; you meant so and so."

"To be sure I did, my dear; how could you think otherwise? I agreed with you perfectly."

"O, well, if that is the case, I shall certainly not oppose you. Do just as you please, my dear."

"No, just as *you* please, my dear."

"Very well, I leave it to you entirely;" and the affair was amicably adjusted. The colonel was satisfied, or rather he chose to be satisfied, that he had his own way; and Mrs. Dangerfield was too considerate to undeceive him.

Having, as we premised, made up his mind to accept the challenge of Lady Molly Magpie, he sought his wife, and apprized her of his resolution. Being a sensible, discreet lady, she of course attempted to dissuade him from carrying it into effect.

"You know, colonel, that Barebones is getting old; he is now eight years of age."

"Seven,—only seven, my dear,—last grass."

"Well, that comes to almost the same thing; it is now the beginning of autumn. But besides this, you remember he faltered and almost broke down in his last contest with Betsey Richards. Everybody said if Betsey had not flown the course he would have been beaten."

"Then everybody talked like fools," replied the colonel, not a little nettled.

Mrs. Dangerfield smiled.

"What everybody says must be true, my dear, according to the old proverb."

"D—n old proverbs! but the short and the long of the matter is, that I am determined to accept this defiance. It shall never be said I

flinched from a challenge of old Allen of Claremont."

"But Allen of Claremont has not challenged you, my dear."

"But he has challenged my horse, and that is just the same thing."

"The challenge is general."

"Yes, but I know he meant me. He can't get over being distanced the first heat at the last fall meeting at Tree Hill, by my three-year-old." And the colonel chuckled mightily at the recollection of his triumph over his old neighbour and rival Allen of Claremont.

"Well, colonel, if you are determined—"

"I am determined—but—but yet—I want to consult you a little about it."

"What, when you are determined?" said Mrs. Dangerfield, a little archly.

"I—I—I want your opinion, Cornelia," said Colonel Dangerfield, drawing his chair confidentially towards his wife.

"My opinion is always at your service, my husband, such as it is; and be assured that whatever it may want in discretion, is supplied by a desire which is never absent from my heart,—that of contributing to your honour and happiness."

"I know it, I know it," cried he, and the dotard kissed her tenderly, though they had been married almost nine years!

"Listen to me," and here his proud spirit hesitated for a moment; "I am in debt more than I have the means of paying."

"I know it, my dear."

"You know it!—in the name of heaven how

came *you* to know what I have tried all I could to keep secret?"

"Affection is both prying and sagacious. I have seen you every week of late receiving letters the handwriting of which I know, and the contents of which I know; for I know that you, my husband, never did any act in your life, save one, that could cause you to shrink from communications from any man living, and exhibit such melancholy feelings on reading them."

"And yet you never inquired about them! wonderful woman!"

"I wished to convince you that a woman can keep her tongue, if she cannot keep a secret," replied the lady, good-humouredly.

"Well, my dear, I am in debt, deeply in debt; my crops are mortgaged for three years at least; the merchant, when I call for farther advances, duns me for those already made. My only chance is upon Barebones,—I intend to risk twenty thousand at least, and if I win, as no doubt I shall, it will make me a man again."

"But if you lose?"

"No danger of that; Barebones may defy all Virginia. But if I should lose by any unlucky accident,—I shall be no worse off than before. I am already indebted more than I can pay without a miracle."

"Not so, my husband,—I think I can put you in a way of retrieving your affairs without a miracle."

"Ah! as how, Cornelia?"

"By saving your next three years' crops to pay the Scotch merchant."

"Save! impossible!" cried the colonel, in utter astonishment; "I never heard of such a thing

in the whole course of my life. How the deuse shall I go about it?"

"In the first place dispose of your race horses."

"Impossible! what will Allen of Claremont say to it?"

"Never mind what he says; he'll think you wiser than he ever did before. In the next place we must omit our winter's visit to Richmond."

'Impossible! what will Mrs. Grundy and all the rest of your old friends say?"

"Let them say what they please. I believe one half the miseries of this life originate in our foolish fears of what people will say of us. Let us do right, and let others wonder if they will."

"Well, well," said Colonel Dangerfield, shaking his head; "what next?"

"We must leave off keeping open house, and treating all comers."

"I'll be hanged if I do!" cried he, in a rage; "what, shut up my doors, like a miserable hunks, and turn my back and pretend not to see strangers as they pass? no, no, that won't do,—what will Randolph of Turkey Island say to that?"

"Why, what can he say, but that you have changed from an imprudent to a prudent man?"

"Prudence! prudence is a beggarly virtue, and I hate the very name of it. Randolph of Turkey Island swears it is a very aldermanly virtue, and I am of his opinion."

"It is a cardinal virtue."

"Yes, but not the virtue of a cardinal;" and the colonel laughed himself almost into good-humour at this happy turn; "well, what else?"

"We can turn the four carriage horses to the labours of the field, and use them on Sundays to go to church."

Now the colonel valued his carriage horses next unto his prime favourite Barebones. They were full brothers and full blooded, and their ancestors, we believe, came over with William the Conqueror. In short, they had a pedigree that might have figured in Ragman's roll, or that of Battle Abbey. The idea of degrading them to the plough overturned all the complacency of spirit engendered by the lucky joke about the cardinal, and the colonel waxed wroth.

"Yes," exclaimed he, "yes, turn the blood of the Godolphin Arabian to the plough tail, work them to skin and bone, till their sleek glossy coats become like the hair of a Narragansett pacer, and then hitch them to the carriage on Sunday, go to church on a snail's gallop, and have old Allen of Claremont laugh in his sleeve at us,—curse me if I ever heard of such an unreasonable woman. No, madam," continued he, with an air and tone of lofty sublimity, "no, madam, never shall it be said that Cuthbert Dangerfield turned a blood horse to a plough's tail, and disgraced his ancestors, himself, and his posterity. Hear me, Mistress Dangerfield!—Barebones shall enter against Molly Magpie, as sure as he has legs to run, and ground to run upon. Old Allen of Claremont shall never have it to say I refused his challenge." And the colonel, according to custom, went to consult with his prime confidant and counsellor, Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, whom it may be proper to introduce to our readers.

This worthy wight was of an unknown relationship to Colonel Dangerfield, a sixteenth cousin removed, who on the score of his near connexion with the family was considered fully entitled to claim bed and board and maintenance at his hands. He

had inherited a pretty good estate which he spent like a gentleman,—that is to say, by paying no attention to his affairs, and wasting every year more than his income. This is an infallible method; but it was too slow for Mr. Littlejohn. Finding he was going down hill, he determined to relieve himself by a speculation. Accordingly he borrowed money, and built a mill on a fine stream of water which ran through his estate. This lucky hit would undoubtedly have retrieved his affairs, had not the stream soon after dried up in consequence of the draining of a great marsh about twenty miles off. Ulysses was advised to prosecute the owner of the marsh for this unneighbourly act. Accordingly he went to law, and everybody prophesied that he was a ruined man. The law, as all know who have had experience in the matter, is as it were a snail without legs. They say it actually does move, but it is not always that people can see it without spectacles. It is therefore little to be wondered at, that rogues should complain, as we are credibly informed they do, that the law is so slow they sometimes lose all patience before they are brought to the gallows. Be this as it may, Mr. Littlejohn waited patiently five years, and was rewarded at last by a decision against him. He was obliged to give a deed of trust on the remainder of his estate to pay a bill, which, if it had been cut into slices, would have made five dozen tailor's measures; and he was indebted for a mill that had no water to set it going. But he was predestined to happiness in this world in despite of fortune; everybody pitied him, yet he was the merriest rogue in all the country round, and did more laughing than any ten men in Virginia,—we

mean white men; for, notwithstanding the negroes are so unutterably miserable, it somehow or other happens that they are a hundred times merrier than their masters.

When the time came to pay the money he had borrowed, he offered his creditor the mill he had built with it. The creditor refused, and Mr. Littlejohn thought him a very unreasonable person. To make an end of the matter, in due time he was obliged to sell his estate, the proceeds of which were just sufficient to pay his debts; and at the age of eight-and-twenty, was left, as the phrase is, high and dry ashore, the most helpless, the most careless, and the most gentlemanly pauper, that ever broke bread in the house of a sixteenth cousin removed. In proportion as Ulysses grew poor, he multiplied his visits to Colonel Dangerfield, whose kindness increased with his poverty. At first he came only to dine, and it was amazing to see the relish with which he drank the colonel's wine, and cracked his jokes as if he had ten thousand a year. By degrees his visits became more frequent, and longer; he sometimes staid all night; from this he got to two or three days, and finally, when his estate departed from him, and he had nothing left but a blood horse descended from Flying Childers by the mother's side, he rode over to Powhatan,—gave his horse to one blackey, his saddle-bags to another, and quietly took possession of his accustomed room. No questions were asked, not a word said,—every thing was understood; he was perfectly welcome, and the matter was settled.

He had now remained upwards of six years an inmate of the family, and during all that time had never once talked of going away, that he

might be pressed to stay. Nay, what is still more remarkable, he had never been reminded by a look, a hint, a word of unkindness, a neglect of the servants, or an omission of the colonel to ask him to take wine, that he was a beggar and dependant. The blackeys loved Massa Leetlejohn, or Massa Lysses, as he was indifferently called, for he made them laugh at his odd jokes; the children of the house followed him about like pet lambs, for he had a pleasure in levelling himself to their capacity, shared in their amusements, made them whistles, told them stories, and gained their little hearts, by repressing all pretensions to superior wisdom. Mrs. Dangerfield was always particularly careful to have his room kept in order, his shoes well cleaned, his apparel whole and decent; and in the season of flowers, you never failed to see a bouquet placed on his table, and a bunch of evergreens in his fireplace.

As to the colonel, he had become so accustomed to Mr. Littlejohn, that he could not live without him. His easiness of temper, his pleasing disposition, his cheerful habit of mind, and, above all, his unparalleled knack at killing time, were invaluable qualities in a companion to a country gentleman, who read little, worked less, and was out of the sphere of those city amusements which in a great degree disarm idleness of its leaden sting. Never man was so expert at getting through a morning as Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, without doing any earthly thing either for "posterity or the immortal gods." Many a time did he and the colonel set forth on horseback for a morning ride, and get no farther than the gateway, where they stopped peradventure to discuss the propriety of a new gate-post or some such

matter. The colonel loved conversation, but was not very fruitful in suggesting topics, or bringing ideas to bear upon them. When, therefore, he was lucky enough to get hold of a subject, he did not like to part with it in a hurry, any more than a dog does to resign his only bone, let it be ever so bare. He soon tired of a person who never contradicted him, for without something of this sort conversation is apt to fall dead to the ground. To do Ulysses justice, though a dependant, he felt his situation so lightly, or rather forgot it so entirely, that he never had the least hesitation in opposing the opinions of the colonel on all occasions where he really differed with him. Thus they lived together in perpetual collision, the best friends in the world, for they helped each other to kill time, and Mr. Littlejohn, in addition to his excellence at making indifferent jokes, had a still more invaluable faculty of laughing heartily at a dull one, after the manner of the members of the English parliament.

The colonel, who, as we premised, departed in wrath from the presence of Mrs. Dangerfield in search of Mr. Littlejohn, found that worthy, lounging as was his custom, about the stable; for there is a singular affinity between an idle man and a horse,—at least there was between Ulysses and honest Barebones, who never failed to twinkle his nostrils and utter a most significant chuckle whenever he received a visit from his friend.

"How is Barebones to-day, cousin Littlejohn?" said the colonel.

"Prime, colonel."

"Do you know that Mrs. Dangerfield says he would have been beaten at Tree Hill course last year if Betsey Richards had not bolted?"

If Mr. Littlejohn had not loved and respected Mrs. Dangerfield above all created beings, he would certainly have spoken, as it were, slightingly of her knowledge in horseflesh, for this gross slander of his friend; as it was, he only said,

"Pooh, colonel! what can a woman know about these matters?"

"Come, come, Ulysses; no reflections on my wife. I wish I may be shot if she isn't the cleverest woman in Virginia."

"Well, I know she is. Heaven forbid that I, who look up to her as an angel down here below, should say any thing in her disparagement. But it's no reflection on a woman to say she knows nothing about horseflesh."

"I tell you, Lyssy, she knows but every thing. I sometimes think the deuce is in her, for she seems to know more than I do—hey!"

"Why, I've sometimes thought so myself, colonel."

"Then you thought like a goose, Lyssy," rejoined the other, who did not like to have anybody agree with him in this surmise. "But, Lyssy,—here, Lyssy,"—and, beckoning him close, he half-whispered in his ear,

"I've a great mind to accept old Allen of Claremont's challenge, and run Barebones against Molly Magpie,—hey, boy?"

"Have you?" quoth Littlejohn, in the same tone, rubbing his hands.

"I'm determined on it."

"Are you, by gum!" exclaimed the other, in a suppressed voice of delight.

"Yes; but—but—do you think there is any truth in what Mrs. Dangerfield said about Barebones?"

"Not a word; he never was in better condition; and, to show you I am sincere in my opinion, damme, colonel, if I don't go your halves in the bet."

"Humph!" said the colonel; but he did not display as much gratitude at this generous offer as might be expected.

The result of this conference was a sudden journey of Mr. Littlejohn up to Richmond, and the subsequent appearance in the newspaper of an acceptance of the challenge of Allen of Claremont by Dangerfield of Powhatan, to run Barebones against Molly Magpie at the next October meeting for twenty thousand pounds, play or pay.

CHAPTER III.

Showing how the Gray Mare proved the better Horse in more ways than one.

All the opposition of Mrs. Dangerfield to the whims and freaks of the colonel was preventive. When the thing was past recall, she ceased to allude to it, unless it happened to turn out well, when she never failed to give him due credit and compliment him on his sagacity. When, therefore, she saw in the public papers the acceptance of the challenge of Allen of Claremont recorded in our last chapter, she knew the matter was decided, and kept her forebodings to herself. She even affected a cheerful confidence in the result, far different from her real anticipations. Should any of our bachelor readers wish to know where to find such a wonder of a woman, we will go so far to allay their curiosity as to assure them that there is actually such a one in the land of the living, and that she resides—the Lord knows where!

Time rolled on—the decisive hour approached—the worthy Mr. Littlejohn for once gathered himself together, cast aside the *vis inertiæ* with a mighty effort, and became a most indefatigable attendant on his illustrious friend Barebones, who was petted as never quadruped was petted before, except it might peradventure be a prize ox, a Teeswater bull, or a royal ram from the Rambouillet flock during the raging of the merino mania. It was now the charming month of October, when

the earth and its foliage, the sky, its sun and stars are so often shaded with a thin misty veil, that while it obscures the face of nature, at the same time renders it more touchingly beautiful. All Virginia was in motion, from the alluvial to the primitive formation, from Chesapeake Bay to the Blue Ridge. The high-mettled cavaliers of the "Ancient Dominion" mounted their high-mettled steeds, anticipated the next year's crop of tobacco, and came with pockets richly lined; and many an ample estate long after rued the racing of that day. Nor must we omit to record that Mrs. Dangerfield took occasion to remind the colonel, that as it was possible he might lose his bet of twenty thousand pounds, his honour required that he should be prepared to pay on the spot. He accordingly once more wrote to his old friend the Scotch merchant, offering to give him a deed of trust for his whole estate if he would advance the sum of forty thouand pounds. The proposal was accepted, the deed executed, and the inheritance of six generations became subject to the disposition of a stranger.

At length the day arrived big with the fate of Lady Molly Magpie and Barebones, of Allen of Claremont and Dangerfield of Powhatan,—and a glorious day it was. Previous to its arrival, Barebones had been escorted, with a dignity becoming the high destinies connected with his speed and bottom, to the neighbourhood of the racecourse. The colonel and Mr. Littlejohn rode on either side, while Barebones, richly caparisoned with a gorgeous blanket, and looking through a pair of holes, like an old gentleman through his spectacles, was led by uncle Pompey, or Pompey Ducklegs, as he was most irreverently nicknamed by the young ebonies, on the score of a pair of little

bandy drumsticks, by the aid of which he waddled along after the fashion of that amphibious bird. Pompey claimed and received this post of honour by virtue of having once had the felicity of belonging to Lord Dunmore, the last royal governor of Old Virginia. He considered himself as a branch of the aristocracy, often boasted that he was one of the few gentlemen left in the Ancient Dominion, and never failed to lay all the blame of bad crops on the revolution. When he recollected that Molly Magpie was an "imported" horse, and a lady besides, his mind misgave him sorely, for he could scarcely bring himself to believe it possible that any animal foaled on this side the Atlantic had a chance of success against one so high bred and highly descended. "Dem *rebel* horse no bottom," thought Pompey. Close behind Pompey the Great rode Pompey the Little, his grandson, to whom the conduct of Barebones was to be intrusted in the coming contest between the houses of Claremont and Powhatan. He was dressed in a sky-blue jacket, red cap, and pantaloons of the same colour; and his black face presented a beautiful contrast to the ivory teeth which he ever and anon displayed in rows the brightest beauty in the land might have envied, as he recalled to mind the promise of his master, that if he won the race, he would give him his freedom and a hundred a year for life. As thus they walked their horses slowly and majestically along, Pompey the Great would ever and anon turn round, shake his fist at Pompey the Little, and exclaim, "You young racksal, you no win dis here race, you disgrace you family—mind, I say so."

The race was to take place precisely at one o'clock, but long before the hour arrived the

course was thronged with thousands of people in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, of all grades, sizes, ages, and colours. The day was charming, the air inspiring, and the scene beautiful and animated beyond description. The racecourse was on an elevated table-land, which commanded a view of the city of Richmond, its imposing capitol (perhaps the finest situated building in the United States), the turbulent rapids of the majestic river foaming and pelting its way among the rocks and islands fast anchored in the waves, and afterwards winding its quiet course at a distance among the round full-bosomed hills, presented a scene which of itself might occupy the attention for hours. But the animation of the course rendered a long abstraction quite impossible. Gallant equipages every moment arriving, in which the pride of Virginia, her wives and daughters, displayed their fair and delicate countenances,—full-blooded horses champing the bit impatiently, and pawing the ground as if anxious to contest the prize of the day, or scouring the plain in all directions, like the winged Arabs of the desert, communicated indescribable gayety and interest to the scene. But the gayest of the gay, the happiest of the happy, the noisiest of the noisy, were the gentlemen of colour, young and old, to whom this was a holyday sanctioned by long prescription. Such a mortal display of ivory and crooked legs, such ecstatic gambols, such triumphant buffoonery, such inspiring shouts, such inimitable bursts of laughter never were seen or heard among the grave, reflecting progeny of freedom; and the spectator might have been tempted to ask himself, "If these are not happy, at least at the present moment, where is happiness to be found?"

At twelve the champions appeared, and all was hushed. The knowing ones followed Barebones and Molly Magpie around the course, scanning them with a keen and critical eye, and making up their minds to bet on one or the other. The coloured rout thronged along the way, looking as wise as their betters, and giving their opinions in prophetic whispers, or climbed the trees and fences to witness the coming trial. Allen of Claremont and Dangerfield of Powhatan met and saluted each other with the dignified courtesy of two knights of chivalry on the eve of a joust in honour of their respective ladies; and it was singular to observe with what a degree of interest and almost sublimity the ownership of two such famous horses and the large sums at stake invested these two gallant cavaliers. The crowd followed them whithersoever they went, and where they were was the centre of attraction.

Tap—tap—tap! went the drum for the second time,—the judges ascended the stand of judgment,—the horses were brought to the starting pole champing and foaming, as if partaking in the feelings of their masters, and equally anxious for the event of the struggle. For our part we have no doubt that race horses are perfectly aware of the object for which they are contesting, and share in the triumph of victory. The judges were now standing with stop watches counting the minutes, and a breathless silence preceded the last tap of the drum. It was a scene of almost unequalled excitement, and in spite of all that may be said in disparagement of the sport, we neither blame those that encourage, nor those who partake in its enjoyment, with due moderation.

Tap—tap—tap! went the drum for the third time. The riders were mounted, and the yellow cap and green vest of Allen of Claremont appeared side by side with the red cap and blue vest of Dangerfield of Powhatan. As Pompey the Great lifted Pompey the Little to the saddle, he repeated for the last time,

"Now you dem racksal, you no win dis race, you disgrace to you family."

The signal was given, and the two noble animals went off with a bound, as if they had suddenly been gifted with the wings of the wind. Now Molly Magpie, being the lighter and weaker of the two, gained upon Barebones, as they came to a little descending ground; and anon Barebones shot ahead, as they rose upon the ascent. The first two rounds continued thus alternately in favour of one or the other, the little red cap and the yellow appeared perched in the air, and the riders seemed hardly to touch the horses they rode. A dead and breathless silence held captive the crowd, and Allen and Dangerfield might be seen, each on a little eminence in the centre of the field, watching the struggle with a steady countenance, and calm determined eye. The third round Barebones decidedly took the lead: first a head, then a neck, then a whole body appeared in advance, and by the time they arrived at the goal, Barebones was computed to be ten lengths ahead of Molly Magpie. The assembled multitude shouted "Victory! Hurrah for Barebones!" and as for old Pompey, he scarcely waited for little red cap to be weighed after the heat, when he hugged him in his arms, and pronounced him an honour to his family.

The second heat was contested with equal ob-

stinacy, but not with the like result; Molly Magpie came in ahead of Barebones, and the knowing ones began to hedge. Just at the moment of starting for the third and last heat, Allen of Claremont exclaimed, in a loud voice,

"Twenty thousand more on the gray mare!"

The temptation was irresistible.

"Done!" cried Dangerfield.

"Done!" cried Allen; and at that instant the horses started to decide the fortunes of the house of Powhatan. For the whole of the three rounds you might have covered them both with a blanket, and nobody knew which had won, until the judges, after some consultation, decided in favour of Molly Magpie, by half a head. The same voices that had shouted and huzzaed for Barebones now shouted and huzzaed for Molly Magpie, such is the instability of popular applause; and it is recorded that Pompey the Great fought that day six pitched battles with certain gentlemen of colour, who belonged to the faction of the gray mare. Yet for all this he could not help saying to himself, "Eh! dem I spect so; dem rumpublican horse he no hold candle to tudder."

Dangerfield dined with the sporting club; toasted the winning horse, laughed his laugh, joked his joke, and received the compliments of many a sympathizing cavalier on the speed and bottom of Barebones, the conqueror of a hundred fields, with an air of careless self possession, that might have aspired to the honours of philosophy had the occasion been more worthy. He felt that he was a ruined man, but he was determined no one should penetrate his feelings, most especially Allen of Claremont.

"If it is inconvenient to you, colonel," said Allen.

"O, not in the least," said Dangerfield; and the debt was paid on the spot.

"Will you sell Barebones?"

"No, sir," replied the other, and abruptly turned away.

The next morning the procession which set out with such exulting anticipations, returned home downcast and dejected, with the exception of the colonel, who was determined to present a dignified front to Mrs. Dangerfield. Mr. Littlejohn, who had not uttered a single word since the loss of the race, rode carelessly on, scarcely holding his bridle, which hung loosely on his horse's mane, and now and then casting his eye with a look of commiseration on his benefactor; old Pompey did nothing but shake his fist at little Pompey; and even Barebones seemed conscious of his defeat, for he slouched along with his head depressed, and had hardly spirit to brush away the flies with his tail.

CHAPTER IV.

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.

If we do not mistake it was Cardinal Richelieu who once boasted that he could make treason or heresy out of any three words in any language; such is the uncertainty of speech, and the ingenuity of man in misinterpreting it! One might suppose that the simple line placed at the head of this chapter could not possibly have afforded any sport to the commentators; and yet it is not so. Some of these have interpreted it as having allusion to a kingly crown, which in these troubled days is in truth little else than a crown of thorns. Others, who doubtless belonged to the ancient, if not very honourable order of old bachelors, have ignorantly presumed that the crown here meant is that piece of silver coin bearing on its face the hooked nose of Louis of France, and formerly passing current in these States at eight and tenpence, and thus attempted to degrade the dignity of the sex down to that ignoble standard. But beshrew their hearts, we say,—meaning thereby, may they marry a shrew, and repent this atrocious blasphemy, in smoky chimneys, and curtain lectures. Who that hath ever known the blessing of a modest, tender, cheerful, sensible helpmate and companion, amid the flowers of youth, the fruits of manhood, and the yellow leaves of declining age, but will recognise that the crown alluded to by the inspired writer is the crown of happiness, and not the thorny bauble for which

men wade through oceans of blood, nor the shining temptation which is so often the price of honour, integrity, and a quiet conscience.

The rumour of the defeat and discomfiture of Barebones reached Mrs. Dangerfield the evening of the day on which it happened. Nobody knew how it came, or who brought the news, for it may be said of Rumour, that, like the pestilence, she walketh in darkness with the speed of thought or anticipation, outstrips the swiftest locomotive, and leaves all human conveyances behind. We have sometimes been almost tempted to believe she possessed the spirit of prophecy, and foretold the future, rather than recorded the past.

Be this as it may, when Colonel Dangerfield, with all the coolness of desperation, apprized his wife of the loss of the race and the ruin of his fortune, she received the information without surprise or emotion. The preceding night she had given to her two children the tears and sorrows of a tender mother; this morning she gave her husband the advice and consolation of a faithful wife. She neither complained nor reproached, but looking the present calmly in the face, asked of the colonel a full and fair statement of his affairs.

"I am a ruined man," said he, firmly, "it is utterly impossible to keep up the establishment any longer."

"Well, then we must retrench, my dear."

"Retrenchment will not do; it is too late now. I would I had taken your advice in time."

"Well, never mind that now. If we cannot live in our accustomed home, we must find one elsewhere. There is plenty of room in this new

world of ours, and wherever we are together there will be our home."

"For God's sake, Cornelia, scold me a little, can't you?" exclaimed Dangerfield, quite overcome. "I have beggared you and the children, and yet you forgive me! Call me fool, idiot, madman, any thing but villain, and I shall feel somewhat relieved. Come, scold, scold, I say; curse me for destroying your happiness and that of our children."

"You have not destroyed our happiness," replied Mrs. Dangerfield; "this is the talk of custom, the folly of inexperience, which thinks it cannot exist except in one round of the same modes and enjoyments. I, sir, as you well know, passed the early part of my life in poverty, with a parent whose estate was confiscated and name dishonoured for his attachment to a worthless master. From this situation you chose me, and placed me in the lap of affluence, where every wish has been gratified. Yet I cannot but confess that, saving the enjoyments of a wife and a mother, I am not, I never was, happier than in the midst of poverty. My dear Cuthbert, this change of fortune will soon teach you how little, how very little, the blessings of life depend on mere situation. Guilt and remorse are the only lasting sources of misery."

"And am I not guilty? and will not my future life be one of bitter compunction?"

"No, not guilty, only imprudent—the imprudence of inexperience and want of thought. Do not quarrel with the lessons of experience," added she, with a smile; "you will be wiser in future."

"Yes, I shall shut the door when the steed is stolen."

"I wish, my dear, Barebones had been stolen six months ago."

"Nay, now, Cornelia, don't blame poor Barebones,—now, don't, I beg of you. Damme if he isn't the finest creature in Virginia, and I have a great mind to match him against Allen of Claremont for the next spring meeting."

"O, colonel! colonel! what's bred in the bone—but I don't abuse Barebones, and I am sure he is the best horse in Virginia; but I hope you won't match him against Molly Magpie again."

"What a fool I am!—what an egregious ass!" cried the colonel, smiting his forehead, and striding about the room.

By degrees Mrs. Dangerfield drew her husband into a detail of the state of his affairs, at least so far as he understood them. The truth is, however, he knew no more about the matter than that paragon of ignorance, "the man in the moon." He made himself out to be over head and ears in debt, and that if he turned his plantation and slaves into gold, they would not pay half of what he owed. Mrs. Dangerfield was astonished, and almost lost her self-possession. She maintained it to be impossible; the colonel insisted it was possible; and the result of the argument was a determination to send for the Scotch merchant to elucidate the matter.

The conference had scarcely ended when a horrible outcry and commotion was heard in the direction of the stables, which were at the distance of about a furlong from the house, and Mrs. Dangerfield begged the colonel to go and see what was the matter. Some husbands would have declined, merely because they consider obliging their wives as a proof of being henpecked; but the colonel was

a little crestfallen at the catastrophe of Barebones and the state of his affairs, and obeyed like a discreet person. Arriving on the premises, he beheld Pompey the Little tied incontinently to a beam, and Pompey the Great (otherwise called Pompey Ducklegs) belabouring him with a cowskin so lustily, that if ever man or boy had a good excuse for roaring like ten thousand bulls of Bashan, it was that luckless composition of ebony. Between every stroke, which was followed by a roar, the indignant Ducklegs would exclaim :—

"You young racksal—you lose he race, eh! —(whack!)—You no beat Molly Magpie, eh!—(whack!)—You no be free nigger, eh!—(whack!) —You no get hundred a year, eh!—(whack!)— You disgrace you family, you young racksal, eh! —(whack! whack! whack!)"

"Pomp," cried the colonel, "how dare you strike any of my slaves without my permission?"

"He disgrace he family, massa."

"Pshaw! untie the poor fellow; he did his best—it was not his fault that Barebones lost. Untie him, I say, and never take such a liberty again, sir."

"Huh!—libbety!" grumbled Pompey Ducklegs, as he obeyed his master, "debbil! an't he old nigger's own flesh and blood, dough he be a disgrace to he family?"

CHAPTER V.

Showing that a Gentleman will understand his affairs the better for a little Arithmetic.

Honour and praise to the illustrious Thomas Dilworth, who whilom, in the days of our flagellation, used to figure in front of Spelling Book and "Schoolmaster's Assistant" dire, with quill behind his ear, in powdered wig, and most redundant chitterling. True it is, that the march of improvement in this stupendous age of self-sharpening pencils, silver forks, antibilious pills, Franklin gridirons, artificial teeth, artificial flowers, artificial women, and other stupendous improvements, —true it is, that this illustrious man hath been elbowed from the hallowed precincts of practical and impracticable schools—we beg pardon, institutes—wherein A, B, C is taught classically, and pothooks and hangers perpetrated according to the true principles of trigonometry,—true it is, that his Spelling Book hath been superseded by millions of new and improved systems invented by ambitious pedagogues for the purpose of picking the pockets of inexperienced parents, and thus benefiting the rising generation,—that his Schoolmaster's Assistant hath given place to the same thing with a different, yea, a more high-sounding name, and that the titlepage consecrated by his powdered pate and sagacious phiz, wherein shone the might of birch, hath been usurped by the effigies of other pretenders who learned figures and

spelling of the immortal gods. "True it is, and pity 'tis 'tis true;" yet if we desert thee for these modern upstarts, O most illustrious Thomas! may we forget our multiplication table, lose the faculty of calculating compound interest on the money we lend to our dear friends, and all our practical knowledge of subtraction be preserved by the necessity of estimating the diminution of our bank stock. Those only whose knowledge of arithmetic will enable them to count the innumerable flagellations we received under the auspices of the illustrious Dilworth ere we could be brought to comprehend the virtue of a common denominator, can estimate the value of this disinterested tribute to his memory.

The summons despatched to the Scotch merchant was in due time followed by the appearance of that exceedingly methodical person, who was animated, governed, and impelled, as it were, by the five rules of arithmetic. He reasoned like a member of congress, in figures, and drew his conclusions from profit and loss. It was equally against his conscience to make a losing bargain as to take an undue advantage for the purposes of gain. Dangerfield, who had no great good-will towards him (for no man loves his creditor), used to tell a story of Mr. Mactabb, which, whether true or not, was somewhat in character. A friend, it seems, proposed to him a shipment of tobacco to Ireland, where its introduction was either prohibited or burdened with enormous duties, observing, at the same time, he doubted whether it would be quite right. Mactabb took out his pencil, and entered upon a long calculation, at the end of which he exclaimed, "Right, sir, right, by a balance of five thousand

pounds." He was, in short, a lover of money; yet, such are the strange inconsistencies of even the most consummate misers, that though they will starve themselves, they sometimes exhibit the most extraordinary traits of generosity. Like pent-up waters, it would seem, when the barrier is once broken through, they flow in a torrent. It was thus with Mactabb, who on more than one occasion had conducted himself with a delicate liberality which seemed little in accord with his general character.

"Can you tell me how much I owe you, Mr. Mactabb?" asked Colonel Dangerfield, almost afraid to hear the answer.

Mactabb took out his memorandum-book, where he had calculated the amount to a fraction. It was somewhat more than seventy-five thousand pounds, Virginia currency.

"No more?" asked the colonel, drawing his breath freely, and rubbing his hands.

Mactabb lifted his specs from before his eyes. and stared at him in astonishment.

"No more, Colonel Dangerfield! why, how much did you think it was?"

"Why, the truth is, sir, I am not good at calculations; and besides, I don't know how it is, but I either kept no account of your advances, or I have mislaid it. I thought I owed you almost twice that sum."

"Here is a phenomenon!" thought Mactabb; "the first man I ever met with who overrated his debts." After a little hesitation, the colonel addressed him again,—

"Mr. Mactabb, you have told me how much I owe you; I wish you would go a little farther, and tell me the amount of my debts to other people."

Mactabb was more astonished than ever; though he had been accustomed to dealing with Virginia planters, he never met with exactly such a one before.

"That, colonel, is out of my power unless you will show me your accounts, your day-book, journal, leger, statement of bills, notes, bonds, acceptances, purchases, &c. &c. &c."

"My what?" exclaimed the colonel, utterly confounded; "I never kept an account in my life."

"No!" exclaimed Mactabb, more astonished than the colonel; "I don't wonder—" and here he checked himself.

"Mr. Mactabb," said Colonel Dangerfield, in a husky tone, "it is useless to look back except with a view to the future. What is done, is done. I sent for you to learn the amount of your claims upon me, and to say that you are at perfect liberty to act on the deed of trust as soon as you please. I can never repay you, and the estate must be sold."

"Sold!"

"Yes—sold."

"Colonel Dangerfield," said the Scotsman, "indulge me a few moments. Is there no way of avoiding this painful sacrifice? I am a man of family myself, sir; my father has an estate in the highlands of Scotland, which, barren as it is, would break his old heart to part with. Will you—to bring the matter to a close—will you place your affairs in my hands, and await the result of my inquiries and arrangements?"

"It is the very thing I wish; for I will acknowledge myself utterly incapacitated for the task."

After gaining all the information possible from Colonel Dangerfield concerning the state of his affairs which was very little, Mactabb departed on

his errand. There is not much difficulty in finding out creditors, and in less than a month he returned with the requisite information. There were a number of considerable demands, but Mactabb was the principal creditor. Again the colonel was surprised at the result, and again was the honest Scot astonished at finding a man who did not owe half as much as he expected.

"Let us see," said Mactabb; "your estate contains—how many acres?"

"I don't know exactly, but I believe about fourteen thousand."

"And the amount of your income is—"

"I can't say how much."

"And the number of slaves—"

"Don't know—my overseer can tell."

"Perhaps we had better call him in;" and the overseer was accordingly summoned. After receiving the necessary information, and the two gentlemen being left alone, Mactabb resumed the conversation.

"Well, Colonel Dangerfield, after all, I don't see that your affairs are so desperate. A few years of saving will set all right again."

"But I don't know how to save."

"O, you will soon learn; necessity is—" and here he checked himself.

"No, I will be sincere with you, Mr. Mactabb; if I continue here I must live as I have been accustomed to live. I must accept invitations, and give them; I must have my equipages, my pack of hounds, my blood horses, and I must keep open house. No, if I cannot hold up my head as I was wont, I am determined to quit this part of the country for ever. Besides, I shall be pestered for debts I cannot pay."

"Let me be your sole creditor, and I will wait your time."

"You? why, I thought you—" and the colonel stammered and stopped.

"I know what you thought me,—a miserly old hunks, and, the Lord forgive me! so I am, I believe, sometimes: the instinct of money-getting frequently overpowers the inward man; but I assure you, colonel, I am at this moment inclined to do you a service."

"I thank you, Mactabb," replied Dangerfield, somewhat suspicious of a design; "but I fear it is out of your power. The estate must and shall be sold publicly, if no private purchaser can be found."

"It will then be sacrificed."

"I cannot help it. Perhaps you will take it off my hands, and pay yourself, with the other creditors?"

Mactabb felt the old money-getting devil tugging at his elbow, and whispering in his ear to accept the offer. For a few moments he listened to the tempter, and felt himself sorely beset by his insinuations. But he said to himself, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and the cowardly imp obeyed.

"What say you, sir," resumed Dangerfield, with a desperate vivacity, "will you take all and pay all?"

"No, I'll be d—d if I do!" Mactabb never swore except when he was going to do a generous action.

"I thought so," observed the colonel, indignantly; "you expect to make a better bargain at a public sale."

"There you thought wrong, Colonel Dangerfield. I expect to make a better bargain in pri-

vate for you; please to attend to me. I still think that the better way would be to keep your estate, and by an inflexible course of economy—[the colonel shook his head]—well, then, to the other point; you must make the best sale you can—"

"I know nothing about bargains."

"More is the pity, Colonel Dangerfield; a man ignorant of bargaining is always at the mercy of rogues."

"And a man acquainted with it is very often a rogue himself."

"Amen—tit for tat is all fair. But to the point once more. In few words, and in all sincerity, I will take your estate."

"Hum!" quoth the colonel, dryly.

"I will pay your debts."

"Hum!" still more dryly.

"I will give you a discharge in full."

"Hum!" as dry as tinder; "and so the matter is settled at last."

"Not quite; there is one condition yet to be complied with; you must—"

"What a cursed old skinflint!" thought the colonel.

"You must bind yourself, your heirs, executors, and assigns to receive from me the just and full sum of five thousand pounds, Virginia currency, as a balance due you in the settlement of this business."

"The devil!" exclaimed the colonel, astonished.

"Do you consent, Colonel Dangerfield?"

"Are you in earnest, Mr. Mactabb?"

"I am always in earnest when I make a bargain."

"Well, then, give me your hand, sir; and damme if you are not the prince of tobacco mer-

chants. You are a right generous fellow; and I'll make you a present of Barebones."

"O, no, no, colonel, don't tempt me to lose my money on a broken-down horse."

"A broken-down horse, sir! Do you mean to insult me by insinuating that Barebones is broke down, or that I would give him to you if he was not at this moment able to beat any horse, mare, or gelding in Virginia?"

"Except Molly Magpie.

"No, sir," cried the colonel, in a rage, "not excepting Molly Magpie. I'll tell you what, Mr. Mactabb, you may be a judge of tobacco, but you know no more of a horse than old Allen of Claremont; and more than that, sir, please to understand I'm off with my agreement. You shan't have my estate; you shan't pay my debts; and damme if I accept your five thousand pounds.—Barebones broke down, indeed!"

It was with some difficulty Mactabb allayed the wrath of the colonel. "A sailor is all one as a piece of his ship," as the old song says, and a Virginian is all one as a piece of his horse. He realizes the fable of the centaurs—he will have a horse if he has nothing else; and if he cannot procure a pair of spurs, he will fasten a single one to his right heel, justly considering that if you prick one side of a horse along, the other will follow of course. Mactabb finally pacified the colonel by some adroit allusions to the exploits of Barebones, and the matter was amicably settled. The colonel consented to have his debts paid, and to receive the five thousand pounds.

"After all I have got a great bargain," said Mactabb, "if I only knew as much about the cultivation of tobacco as of its quality and value."

"And I have made a good bargain too," said the colonel, with a sigh, "if I only knew as well how to make, as I do about making away with money."

As the winter was now at hand, it was settled that Colonel Dangerfield should remain where he was until spring; and after discussing a bottle of Madeira from a vintage which I believe preceded the discovery of that island, Mactabb departed for his residence in the city of Richmond, the abode of hospitable men and bonny lasses. Here he set about arranging the affairs of Colonel Dangerfield with that indefatigable zeal which marked his character. Next to making money it was his greatest pleasure to pay it where it was honestly due, though we are obliged to confess that, on this occasion, tradition says he squeezed some of the colonel's creditors at such a horrible rate, that they did not recover their breath for a week afterwards. Among the greatest sufferers was an honest painstaking cobbler, who whilom was wont to officiate for the dingy vassals of Powhatan, from whose bill he victoriously deducted sixpence in the matter of a pair of heeltaps.

CHAPTER VI.

Westward Ho!

Colonel Dangerfield felt happier than he had been for many a day, after concluding the arrangement with Mactabb. He was relieved from the load of debt,—the heaviest load, except that of sin, that ever fell on the shoulders of mankind. Besides this, the thing was settled; and when that is the case none but the weaker minded shrink from the crisis, be it what it may. In the true spirit of conjugal confidence, the colonel sought his wife to communicate with her about the best mode of settling the affair—after it was all settled. Mrs. Dangerfield could not help smiling at this complimentary appeal: "better late than never," she thought; and kindly expressed her satisfaction that the thing was no worse.

"But we must leave this next spring, and whither shall we go?" said she.

"O, there is time enough to think of that—no use in troubling ourselves before it is necessary. The spring will soon come, Cornelia."

"Too soon," thought Mrs. Dangerfield, and her naturally sweet voice softened into the most touching pathos. "The spring will soon come, the birds in our copses will soon begin to sing, the flowers in our garden soon begin to bloom, the meadows will be green before we are aware, and —and—we must be getting ready to go somewhere."

"Well, well, don't think of it, Cornelia,"—and he came and took her hand, and squeezed it affectionately, as we are living souls!—"don't think of it, and forget what a brute I have been."

Mrs. Dangerfield—we are almost afraid to record it; it is so incredible that we are sure the reader, if he or she hath the least experience in the world, will refuse to credit the whole of this veritable history, on the score of such an outrage on probability—Mrs. Dangerfield threw her arms about his neck, kissed him, and, though she did not swear he was no brute, thought so from the bottom of her heart; and yet the man was her husband!

February now came, in this mellow clime the herald of brighter days and warmer sunshine. The little birds, that come from heaven knows where, all at once appeared, and twittered among the alders that skirted the silent rivulets, which, unseen as they were unheard, were only betrayed in their quiet course by the fresh green grass that marked their meanderings; the frogs, whose music, harsh as it is, is welcome at such a time, as the sure precursor of the genial season, piped in the ponds the violets just began to peer above the ground in pale-blue clusters; the dark-brown of the woods gradually changed to an almost imperceptible purple; the wild geese were heard gabbling their course invisible in the air, from the south to the north; and all nature, animate and inanimate, began to partake in the joyous influence of the season;—all except the family of Colonel Dangerfield, to whom the approach of spring was the signal of exile.

"What can have become of Mactabb, I wonder?" observed the colonel to his wife one mild

evening, as they sat at the window watching the quiet course of the river that flowed at a little distance; "he ought to be here before this."

"From what you have told me of Mr. Mactabb, I am inclined to think he won't come till you send for him. His visit would look as if he came to hurry us away."

"True; I had forgot that. I must write to him."

Accordingly he wrote to Mactabb to prepare all the necessary documents, and bring them as early as possible. He came in a few days, produced his own discharge and those of all the creditors, and the estate of Powhatan was consigned to him for ever. The hand of Colonel Dangerfield trembled a little as he signed his name; but that of his wife, though white and delicate as a snow-drop, was steady as the oak that defies the storm. A dead silence succeeded this painful ceremony. It was at length broken by Mactabb, who, after fumbling in his pocket some time, produced a paper which he handed to the colonel, saying,

"Here is the balance due on—plague take it, what a cough I've got—somehow I always catch cold in this confounded month of February. Here is a draft for five thousand pounds, and—and may heaven prosper you with it."

The colonel received it with a silent bow, and then another pause ensued. Again it was broken by Mactabb.

"D—n it, I will—yes, I will—I have a right, and I will," mumbled he, as it were to himself; "Colonel Dangerfield—hem—will you permit—will you forgive me if I ask what are your plans for the future?"

"Good God! that's true; we have settled nothing as yet."

"Understand me, colonel, I do not wish to hurry you, this house and this estate are yours, to remain as long as you please, the longer the better. But possibly I may aid you with my advice; I am a man of business, you know, and my experience is heartily at your service."

"There is no occasion, sir," replied Dangerfield, coldly, and rather haughtily, for this was the first time of being reminded that he was no longer in his own house.

"But there *is* occasion, my dear," said Mrs. Dangerfield, good-humouredly, "and we shall be thankful for Mr. Mactabb's advice."

"Well, then, there are two ways of retrieving our fortunes, one by industry and economy, the other by enterprise and daring; which do you prefer, Colonel Dangerfield?"

"The latter, undoubtedly. Long habits have incapacitated me for the first, but I believe, I trust, sir, I am still able to venture, to dare, and to suffer, if necessary. That course, however, I confess would be most agreeable to me, which led to a distant sphere of action. I cannot live as I and my fathers have been accustomed to live here, and my intention is to go where I am not known."

"Would you like to go to Kentucky?" asked Mactabb.

Mrs. Dangerfield started.

"What! the dark and bloody ground, as I have heard it called?"

Colonel Dangerfield considered a few moments, and seemed pleased with the suggestion of Mactabb. The Scot then informed him that he had

lately come into the possession of a large tract of what was represented to be the richest land on Kentucky River, which he had accepted in lieu of a debt. That a company, with which he had associated himself, was going to form a settlement immediately, a number of emigrants having entered into an agreement to "start" in the month of March, and rendezvous at Pittsburg, whence they were to descend the Ohio to the mouth of the Kentucky; and finally, that if he would take the direction of the adventure, the choice of as much land as he wished was at his service.

During this detail, Colonel Dangerfield exchanged glances with his wife, whose countenance, like the limpid waters of Lake George, reflected every thing that passed over it. She was thinking of the tales of murder and massacre which constitute the early history of the dark and bloody ground; the dangers, the loneliness, the privations, her husband, her offspring, and herself must suffer and endure; the toils that must be encountered ere they could reach their destined home, and the exposures that would follow before they could expect to dwell in safety under their own vine and their own fig-tree. She shuddered as she thought of the future destinies of her children, who had been bred in all the luxurious indulgence of southern habits, and whose every want, and wish, and caprice had been gratified by the willing assiduity of slaves, who never contradicted or opposed their most unreasonable desires. But in a few moments the cloud passed away.

Women, even the most delicately nurtured, and the most apprehensive in their dispositions, love adventure and excitement in their very hearts. Distant journeys enchant them, and the anticipa-

tion of novelty is irresistible. Even danger has its charms, and we have more than once seen females whose vivacity was always quickened by its approach. Travelling is much more delightful to them than to the other sex, and the prospect of change a thousand times more seductive, from its contrast with their domestic habits, and the uniformity of their occupations. The name of the Ohio, *La Belle Riviere*, sounded so charmingly, and the prospect of gliding down its smooth and glassy stream, amid endless forests, and vast solitudes of nature, came with a romantic seduction across her imagination, and lighted up her face with a willing smile of acquiescence in the proposed plan. We have been sometimes led to believe that the natives of this land of emigration inherited from their ancestors that fearless wandering disposition, which brought them to the western world, and which, operating in a region of boundless space, is, however it may be the subject of ridicule or censure, the habit, or the quality, which has made this country what it is, and will make it what it is destined to become. It is founded in the love of independence, associated with, and supported by courage and enterprise. Like the young partridge, the American is scarcely hatched, ere he sets out, with the shell still clinging to his downy wing, in search of a new region where he will no longer be a burthen to himself or others.

Assuredly the attachment to home, the ties of kindred, the chains of custom, and the habits of youth exercise a wholesome influence in softening and humanizing mankind. Yet still they ought never to be indulged at the sacrifice of the higher qualities, and more inflexible duties, of the human

race. To be a useless idler at the parental fireside, a burthen on the shoulders of kindred, or a dependant on the kindness or bounty of friends, rather than burst these ties and attachments, however amiable it may be, sinks us below, far below the level of the generous manly spirit, which scorns the indulgence of such a weakness at such a price, and dashes forth into the stormy ocean of life, trusting to himself and his Maker whether he shall sink or swim.

"What say you, Cornelia?" asked the colonel, who saw her answer in her speaking eye; "shall we accept the offer, and become the founders of a new empire?"

Mrs. Dangerfield replied in something like the choice language of a Scripture matron.

"Wheresoever thou goest, there will I go; wherever thou abidest, there will I also abide; whatever thou endurest, I will bear my portion of the chastening; thy hope shall be my hope, thy disappointment my disappointment. I am ready to go with thee, my husband, be it whither it will."

Mactabb, who had a physiognomy as rough as the outside of an oystershell, took occasion to wipe his spectacles, which had become rather dim from their proximity to his eyes. And now they proceeded to settle those little details, which however indispensable both in the ordinary and extraordinary affairs of life, are utterly unworthy the dignity of romance, which we maintain, in the very teeth of the musty bookworm critics, is the most dignified, as well as useful of all kinds of writing, if not to the reader, at least to the author. What did Dan Homer get for his immortal poems? Did he get a place at court, a pension,

or a title? or did he get his pockets filled with ready money? Verily, no,—he attained to the honour of keeping a school on a rock, and afterwards, when old and blind, was chosen king of the beggars, the only dignity he ever arrived at during his life. What did Will Shakspeare get for Othello, Macbeth, Richard, and the Midsummer Night's Dream? A benefit at the "Red Bull," or some such queer place. What did Otway get for his Venice Preserved? A crust of bread which choked him. What Milton, for one of the very noblest efforts of human genius? The price of a new suit, and liberty to stay in England without being hanged. What did Locke get for the only analysis of the human understanding which the human understanding was ever able to comprehend? Not a vice-chancellorship, mastership, or wardenship, but a sentence of expulsion from a most reverend rookery.

But to return from this digression into which we have been incontinently allured, by the glorious vision of a mighty purse of golden eagles (a species of bird now almost extinct in this hemisphere) flitting before us, and making a music to which that of Pasta and Paganini is a horrible discord.

CHAPTER VII.

Colonel Dangerfield prepares to found a new Empire.

KNOWING how egregiously the gentle and enlightened reader is an hungered after stirring adventures, bloody feats, and such like delectable ingredients, which, like Cayenne and spices, give a triumphant zest to literary entertainments, and how justly he abhorreth that dull and diabolical fiend called Common Sense, we shall not detain him from the marvellous wonders in store for him a moment longer than is necessary to record a few indispensable preliminaries.

When it was known that the estate of Powhatan, with all its live stock, two-legged and four-legged, saving and excepting Barebones, Pompey Ducklegs, Pompey the Little, and the rest of the Pompey family, young and old, amounting to some five-and-forty, had passed away from their ancient owner, there was weeping and gnashing of teeth among the inhabitants of the little village of cabins, where dwelt the slaves of Colonel Dangerfield, in the possession of all those enjoyments of which their state is susceptible. They thronged about their master and mistress, begging to be taken with them to "Old Kentuck," where they would cut down the big trees, plant corn, and kill the Indians. The colonel was affected, and Mrs. Dangerfield could not restrain her tears; but, it being now evening, she directed the inspiring banjo to be twanged by the minstrel of Powhatan,

who, strange to say, was prophetically christened by the name of Orpheus, or Apollo, for, beshrew our memory, we have forgotten which. At that irresistible signal, the light-hearted slaves, the very prototypes of children in their joys, their sorrows, their forgetfulness of the past, their indifference to the future, listened, dried their tears, and soon they were dancing "double trouble" and light Virginia reels, with a triumphant, grotesque gesticulation, a zest, an hilarity seasoned by such shouts of laughter as only the echoes of the south repeat to the listening landscapes far and wide. They seemed to be happy, and we hope they were; for it is little consolation to know, or to believe, that a mode of existence of which millions of beings partake is inevitably a state of wretchedness.

To the honour of Colonel Dangerfield it must be recorded, that though Pompey the Little did not win the race, he offered him his freedom on this occasion.

"I cannot afford to give you money," said he, "but I can give you freedom."

To the still greater honour of Pompey, he declined the offer.

"Ony don't leave me behind, massa; dat all nigger want."

When the great Ducklegs heard this, he forgave him the loss of the race, and pronounced him decidedly "an honour to he family."

"But what has become of Mr. Littlejohn all this while?" the reader may peradventure inquire.

When the colonel apprized him of the transfer of his property to Mactabb, and the intended emigration to Kentucky, he exclaimed, with uncontrollable emotion, "My G—d!" and burst into a passion of tears.

His benefactor, who had never suspected him of so much feeling before, endeavoured to comfort him, by suggesting a variety of topics of consolation. But it was all in vain; he continued to weep with a degree of convulsive agitation exceedingly painful. The long winter, which had frozen his feelings into ice, seemed to have broken up on a sudden, and the pent-up waters flowed forth scorning all restraint.

"Don't take on so, Ulysses," said the colonel; "I am not so poor but I can allow you something to live on when I am gone. Mactabb will receive you for a small allowance, and that I can spare without difficulty."

"May the thunder and lightning strike Mactabb and all his race!" cried Littlejohn, suddenly checking his emotion, or rather turning it into another channel.

"Shame, Littlejohn, shame!—what has Mr. Mactabb done that you should set the thunder and lightning at him?"

"He's got Powhatan, d—n him!"

"Well, what of that? he came by it honestly."

"I don't believe it. I don't believe it possible for one man to get the estate of another honestly. It stands to reason the Old Boy must help him, more or less!"

The colonel could not forbear a smile at this theory of Mr. Littlejohn.

"The Old Boy sometimes helps people to get rid of an estate, I believe, as well as to get one. But I'll tell you what, Ulysses, I intend to give you Barebones. I can't bear to sell him."

"Barebones, colonel!—I wouldn't have him if he carried a packsaddle of guineas; he's just fit to take a bag of corn to mill, and be hanged to him! Blame me if I believe in his pedigree."

"You don't, Mr. Littlejohn? Let me tell you, sir—confound me, sir!—let me tell you, Mr. Littlejohn,"—and the colonel spoke between his shut teeth,—"that if your pedigree were as undoubted as that of Barebones, you might hold up your head a little higher than you do. Look here, sir,"—jerking out his pocket-book,—"look here, sir,"—taking out a piece of smoke-dried paper,—"look here, sir,"—unfolding it,—"dam, Kitty Fisher, sir; grandam, Slow and Easy, sir; great-grandam, Singed Cat, sir; great-great-grandam, Pettitoes, sir; great-great-great-grandam—'sblood! Mr. Littlejohn, I expect the next thing you do will be to call me the son of a tinker!"

A moment after the hand of Mr. Littlejohn was clasped in his own, for he remembered that Ulysses was a dependant, and himself his benefactor.

"Well, well, colonel, I'm sure I didn't mean to affront you; but that tobacco merchant has put me so out that I hardly know what I say. I beg your pardon for undervaluing poor Barebones."

This was the first time he had ever begged the colonel's pardon, and he did it now in compliment to his misfortunes.

"Then you will take the horse?"

"No, you had better sell him; Allen of Claremont told me the other day he would give a thousand pounds for him."

"I'd rather shoot him than sell him to Allen of Claremont."

"Well, then, colonel, do what you please with him, but don't part with me. Take me with you, and I'll work for you, fight for you, die for you, or my name's not Littlejohn."

"If I thought you would be comfortable in the wilderness, I should like to have you with me."

"Comfortable! I shall be happy, colonel; and I can make myself useful too. You know I am a capital shot—a true sportsman."

"Yes, I know you sometimes wander about all day, and come home half-starved, mud up to the middle, with a bag as empty as when you went forth."

If his patron had not just parted with his estate, Mr. Littlejohn would have taken this matter up warmly; but as it was, he replied, with no little appearance of mortification,

"Ah! colonel, you will have your joke. But for all this, I'll bet you I shoot the first bear—"

"Done!" said the colonel; "what is your wager?"

"Nothing," said the other; "I have nothing to lose, now I think of it, but your good-will, and that I would not willingly risk. But take me with you. I never asked any thing of you before, for you never waited for that; but now I do beg of you to take me with you, because I know I can be of use some way or other."

"You will be tired of the woods."

"No, I won't."

"You will be miserable."

"And if I am, may I be obliged to work for my bread all my days if you or any other living mortal shall know it. I will take care of the horses; if they stray into the woods I'll be bound I find them. I will watch over the children; and blame me, if a copper-coloured creature shows his face, if I don't spoil it for him in less than no time. Do let me go."

"On one condition I will. Promise me, Littlejohn, that if you get tired, you will tell me so, that I may send you back again."

"There is no use in it, colonel; but I do promise. If I should be such a rascal, I'll tell you honestly; and then—I hope the first bear I meet will hug me to death."

It was settled accordingly that he should accompany the party; and Littlejohn forthwith sought his old friend Barebones, to whom he communicated the matter, and who received the news with one of his usual significant chuckles, being doubtless ignorant that this arrangement would for ever separate them in this world.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Over the hills and far away."

The arrangements of the company contemplated a meeting of the little band of emigrants at Philadelphia, as a portion of them were to come from the eastward; and Colonel Dangerfield accordingly took up his line of march for that beautiful city, unmindful of the dangers he was about to encounter from the non-combatant inhabitants. We pass over the farewell scene; the sincere though short-lived griefs of the vassals of Powhatan at parting with their good "massa" and kind "missee;" the thoughtless wonder of the two children; the long, last, lingering, farewell look of the parents, as they stopped the carriage for a moment on the summit of a hill, and gazed their eyes dim at the home they were destined never to visit again. It was a lovely, peaceful scene; but what is beauty, what is peace, what is every earthly enjoyment but gall and bitterness when we know that we see, and feel, and taste them for the last time!

We would willingly linger a little while to describe the abode of Colonel Dangerfield; but we have a long journey and a long story before us. Description must in future give place to action, and sentiment to adventure. We must be busy, and if we occasionally stop a moment to utter a thought or describe a scene in the course of our wayfaring, it must be brief, for the time is precious. Life is short and romances long. Happy, thrice

happy is he, and thrice three times wise, who hath time and patience to read them all!

The party gave one day to Richmond and their friends. Everybody pitied Mrs. Dangerfield, and yet, perhaps, she was quite as happy as themselves; for nothing is more common than such mistakes. Mactabb was with them all day; and that he gave them his time, which he considered the most precious of all things, was a greater proof of his friendship than even the many necessary little articles his foresight had provided for their comfort, and which he insisted on their accepting. Honest Scot! perhaps thou and I are about to part for ever; yet in this age of blustering pretence, empty affectation, commonplace cant, and unprincipled prodigality, I will not miss this opportunity of bearing my testimony to thy unpretending homely virtues, although, in honest truth, thou hadst of all men I ever saw the most unpromising face for a philanthropist. The colonel presented him with the renowned Barebones, and Mactabb promised on his word that he should never be degraded to any useful occupation.

Nothing worthy of record occurred in the journey to Philadelphia; but scarcely had Dangerfield established himself in a hotel ere Pompey Ducklegs was beleaguered by a well-meaning gentleman, who assured him that, if so pleased, he and all the Pompey family were free from that moment. The name of freedom is dear to the heart of man, most especially of the man of colour; and Pompey was sorely tempted to abandon his old master. Just then, however, a miserable, debased, poverty-stricken black man came by, and, stopping opposite the gentleman, begged his charity.

"Art thou not ashamed, being a freeman, friend, to beg in the streets? Canst thou get no work?"

"I have been a long time sick, and am too weak to work," was the reply.

"Well, then, come to my house this afternoon, friend, and I will give thee an order to the hospital."

The pauper passed on without thanking him, and he had scarcely departed when a black woman, displaying in her face and clothing all the indications of profligacy and misery, staggered past them, uttering the most disgusting and blasphemous imprecations. She was followed by a child of the same colour, crying and calling after her in a language as depraved as her own. Close in their rear marched a ferocious bewhiskered caitiff, dark as ebony, gallanted by two peace-officers; he had been guilty of robbing and almost murdering a white woman.

"Who all dese here people?" asked Pompey, in a tone of dignified disgust.

"They are free people of colour, friend; and thou canst be free likewise if thou wilt."

"No, tank you," quoth Ducklegs, and departed without ceremony to solicit his master to buy these miserable people and take them to Kentucky.

A few days sufficed to bring together and to complete the preparations of the little band of adventurers; and now they were on their way to Pittsburg, whence they were to descend the Ohio to the place of their final destination. At that time, the region beyond the great Alleghany range of mountains, the whole of the valley of the Mississippi (which centres within its vast tide the tributary waters of a thousand

streams, coming, as it were, from the opposite ends of the earth) was denominated the Back Woods. The inhabitant of the Atlantic states looked at the blue outline of these majestic hills, which are aptly called the back-bone of North America, as the extremest verge of the civilized world of the West. Beyond was all forests, wild beasts, and wild Indians, in their estimation. It was the region of danger, of adventure, and romance, and, to the timid, apprehensive mind, it loomed "that bourne from whence no traveller returns." Indeed, no one at this late period can realize the romantic, the appalling interest which accompanied the emigrants to this wild and dangerous solitude, or estimate the heroism of those who first dared to encounter its tremendous vicissitudes.

It was towards the middle of the month of March that they began to ascend the Alleghany Mountains by a slow and painful pace. They had seen them at a great distance for some days, rearing their blue heads, and carrying their waving lines from south to north, as far as the eye could reach, and it seemed to them that they formed the barriers of the world in that direction. Occasionally they encountered one of those "land carracks" called Pittsburg wagons, conducted by a strange original, who lived on the road all his life, and whom we are almost tempted to describe as a new and rare species, which in this age of canals, railroads, and steamboats, will, like the Mississippi boatmen and the mammoth, soon become extinct, and be classed among the fabulous creations of monsters. Sometimes they met a drove of swine, more numerous than the wool-clad warriors of Trapoban, so disastrous to him of the rueful countenance, and of such an original air of

wildness, such rugged coats, and such a savage grunt, that they seemed to be the representatives of the wild region from which they were emigrating. Here and there along the road were seen the relics of many a wayfaring catastrophe, —broken axletrees, wheels reft of their tire, and other mementoes of disasters dire. Nay, the very signs of the taverns savoured of an approach to new scenes and associations. The Wild Turkey, the Bald Eagle, the Wolf, and the Bear, portrayed in all the horrors of rustic ingenuity, and coloured with an utter disregard of nature and probability, gave shrewd indications that here was to be found entertainment for man and horse.

At length, descending the last ridge of the Alleghany, they were greeted with the first view of the valley of the Ohio. We would attempt to describe the vast yet beautiful features of this striking and magnificent display; but we are not on a picturesque tour, and though we delight to linger in the delicious solitudes of nature, and love to recall their recollection more vividly by describing them, yet time presses, and we must pass on to other scenes.

On arriving at Pittsburg, Colonel Dangerfield assumed the task of superintending the preparations for embarking on the Ohio. Mr. Littlejohn proffered his assistance with great alacrity, and it was highly amusing to see that professional idler all at once metamorphosed into a most provoking and inveterate busybody, with the happiest faculty in the world of delaying every thing he undertook to advance, and standing in the way of everybody he affected to assist. The colonel too was deplorably deficient in experience of the best means and modes of conducting these modern argonauts;

but, as it happened, fortune had sent him a most efficient coadjutor in the person of one of the party, who had been in Kentucky before, and, as he said, was as much at home there as a prairie-dog in his hole.

His name was Ambrose Bushfield, born in North Carolina, and one of those singular examples of native energy, inborn sagacity, and daring enterprise with which the early history of every part of the west abounds. Nurtured among the mountains of his native state, free as the air he breathed, he grew up tall and straight, and hardy as the trees of the primeval forests, where he passed most of his time in hunting and rural sports of danger and enterprise. He could neither read nor write, yet he was not ignorant or vulgar; and his feelings, by some strange freak of nature or combination of circumstances, partook of the character of gentleman in more ways than one. It was said that an early disappointment in love, or, as others affirmed, the discovery that the region he inhabited was becoming so populous that he could hear his neighbour's dog bark, drove him some years before to join his fortunes with Boone, who was then laying the foundation of what will probably some day be one of the richest and most populous empires of the world.

After encountering a series of dangers and sufferings such as nothing but reality can make credible, he was captured by the Indians, who painted him black, and devoted him to the torture. Their intention was to carry him to their village before they proceeded to the last acts of barbarity. In the mean time they amused themselves with placing him bound hand and foot on a half-wild horse they had stolen on the borders of Virginia,

and setting him adrift, like Mazeppa,* to scamper through the woods full speed, while the savages followed, yelling in horrible triumph. At every Indian village they visited he ran the gauntlet after their fashion, where hundreds of savages placed themselves in parallel rows, armed with clubs and whips, with which each one did his best to beat him to the earth before he reached the goal, where, if he arrived, he was entitled by inflexible custom to exemption from the stake. There is scarcely a possibility that this should ever happen, except by a miracle; and accordingly Bushfield, though he had the strength of a giant and the nerves of a lion, was invariably knocked down before he could gain the sanctuary of the council-house.

Arriving at their village, preparations were made for burning him; and the ceremony was about to commence, by marching the wretched victim round the village with shouts and savage yells, with a view to wear down his strength and spirit, so that they might enjoy his fears and banquet on his groans. In the course of this circuit they passed the hut of one of those renegade white men whose crimes had banished him from the society of his fellows, and who had taken refuge among the Indians. His hatred of the whites was that of a fiend; and among all the cruel enemies, whether man or beast, whom the early emigrants had to encounter, this wretched outcast was the most to be dreaded. On hearing what was going forward, he rushed out of his cabin, like a tiger from his lair, seized the victim round the waist, threw him to the ground with all

* See "Recollections," of the Reverend Timothy Flint.

the force of malignant fury, and, placing his knee upon his breast, flourished his knife in triumph.

Bushfield recognised in this ruthless recreant one of the early companions of his youth. He called him by name, told him his, and besought his good offices. The appeal was not in vain. Wretch as he was, the renegade remembered and yielded to the claims of his boyish associate. He lifted him from the ground, and the recollections of his youthful home, his early attachments; of what he had been, and what he was, so wrought upon his iron heart, that he embraced Bushfield, and wept while he promised his interposition in his favour. Such was his influence, that he finally obtained the pardon of the captive, who was permitted to accompany him to his hut. But the renegade, who knew too well the unsteady nature of the savages, and the difficulty with which they were brought to relinquish the gratification of torturing a prisoner, advised and assisted Bushfield to make his escape that very night. Accordingly he fled, and though obliged to thread a pathless forest of some hundreds of miles without compass or direction except his own sagacity, he finally reached the settlement of his old friend Boone time enough to enjoy the pleasure of avenging his sufferings, by assisting in beating a party of Indians that soon after besieged the little fort of the patriarch of Kentucky. Many years having elapsed since he left the place of his birth, he determined to pay it a visit; but finding, as he said, the country become so effeminate and corrupt that the men preferred featherbeds to dry leaves, and woollen coverlids to a sky blanket, he was now on his return to spend the remainder of his days in "Old Kentuck," which after all was

the only place for a gentleman, though to be sure it was becoming rather too thickly settled. In his person Bushfield was one of those rare specimens of men, the united product of pure air, wholesome exercise, warlike habits, and perfect freedom of body and mind. He was upwards of six feet high, perfectly straight, and without an ounce of superfluous flesh in his whole composition. There was a singular ease, one might almost call it gracefulness, in his carriage; and his dress, which consisted of a buckskin hunting-shirt, a rackoon-skin cap and leggings, was highly picturesque. There was nothing vulgar or dowdy in his appearance or address, which was that of a man who believed himself equal to his fellow-men in any circumstances or situation that called for the exercise of manly vigour or daring enterprise.

Divers were the consultations of the colonel with his trusty and efficient counsellor Bushfield on the selection of barks to float them down the Ohio, for verily there was a sufficient variety to puzzle one in the choice. Here was the Alleghany skiff, the dug-out, formed from a single tree, the piroque, the covered sled, the keel-boat, the flat-boat, and every other boat that the genius of man, left to its unlimited caprices, or inspired by the fruitful mother of invention, could contrive or bring to maturity. Among these the capacious broad-horn appeared eminently conspicuous, resembling a floating house, nearly as broad as it is long, and containing a suite of apartments for almost every animal, from sovereign man to subject cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, and ignoble swine. In its primitive simplicity it hath neither bow nor stern, larboard nor starboard: and in high spring freshets, as they are called, it is the most conve-

nient boat in the world, since if it strikes the shore with one horn, it directly wheels round with the current, and away it goes the other end foremost.

The colonel and his prime minister decided at length in favour of the broad-horn, and accordingly some of prodigious dimensions were hired, almost large enough to accommodate the manifold freight of old Noah's ark. In these were embarked most of the necessaries for forming a new settlement far in the wilderness, certain domestic animals equally indispensable, and the company of emigrants, with the exception of Colonel Dangerfield and his family, who had a smaller broad-horn provided for their especial accommodation. The colonel had purchased a quantity of plain and substantial furniture and a small collection of books, among which was a volume of laws, to aid him in the government of his woodland empire. The river being now rising, and sufficiently high for their purpose, they all embarked one fine sunshiny morning, and, launching their broad-horns on the ample tide, bade a long adieu to the haunts of civilized man, the enjoyments of civilized life.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now fare thee well, dear haunts of social men!
Long may it be ere we shall meet again.
Farewell the village church and tolling bell,
Sounding to prayers or rustic fun'ral knell;
The lively fields, where men and herds are seen
Sporting or labouring morn and eve between;
The smoke of rural hamlet curling high
Above the trees, in peaceful summer sky;
The ploughman's whistle, and the lambkin's bleat,
The tinkling music of the herd so sweet,
All, all farewell!"

THE broad-horn in which Colonel Dangerfield and his family embarked on their voyage down the Ohio formed an oblong square, on which was erected a rather rude cabin, containing two rooms sufficiently tight to protect them against the ordinary vicissitudes of the weather. The captain and owner of this primitive vessel was a long-sided, weather-beaten oddity, by name Sam Hugg, who was all the way from Mad River, and always, according to his own account, "wide awake and duly sober." His assistants were two men and a lad, whose real or whose nickname was Cherub Spooney, "a smart chance of a boy any how." A large portion of the banks of the Ohio was at that time in a state of nature, yet still of nature in the prime of her beauty. The morning was mild and fair, and the young spring had now put on her robe of whispering leaves. Gigantic sycamores, the growth of ages, and the children of an unexhausted soil, lined the

way on either hand, except occasionally in some receding cove, a little prairie covered with wild flowers varied the scene. Not a living soul except themselves seemed to breathe, and move, and have a being in this region of repose; which, notwithstanding, teemed with danger and death. Within the bosom of these eternal forests roamed herds of savage beasts and savage men, who, indeed, at this moment professed to be at peace with the white man, but whose friendship could not be depended on from one hour to another. They glided along without noise and without toil, and, to judge from the listless inactivity of the boatmen, one would have set them down as the most indolent of mankind, and their occupation the least laborious and dangerous.

But perhaps no people on the face of the earth or the waters endured more hardships, encountered more severe toils, or displayed more energy and perseverence in the hour of vicissitude. Many a rude memorial along the banks of the Ohio and Mississippi to this day marks the last resting-place of some worn-out boatman, and attests that here as well as elsewhere life resembles the stream of which the descent is smooth and easy, the ascent a perpetual struggle, ending in disappointment and death.

As thus they slipped along, the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield sat watching the ever-changing, melancholy, yet delightful scene, opening at every turn of this the most beautifully serpentine of all the rivers of the west, some new vista of little wild meadows, round forest hills, or abrupt cliffs frowning over the waters. There was something in the scene before them, the anticipation of that which was to come, and

the memory of those which were past, that called up feelings of melancholy neither altogether painful, nor yet devoid of painful associations. We will not so far undervalue our readers as to suppose them incapable of realizing what these were; for who is there that has not at some time or other, in youth or manhood, been cut adrift from some long-cherished tie, some favourite spot, some dear enjoyment? and who is there that has not been reminded bitterly of the past by the very enjoyments of the present moment?

No one relished the scene and the occasion so much as Mr. Littlejohn. The quiet, the repose, the freedom from all labour and exertion came over him with a delicious enchantment, and, as he was wont afterwards to say in his old age, laid his soul upon a feather-bed. He scraped acquaintance with Captain Hugg, who charmed him with the story of the Indian who found a flint, and travelled three hundred miles to buy a gun for it; of the attack and discomfiture of the band of robbers which once occupied Mason's Cave, and plundered the boats as they passed up and down the stream; and various famous legends of this land of romance and adventure. In the evening he played the fiddle for him delightfully, while the boatman danced Virginia reels on the roof of the broad-horn, and made little Cherub Spooney sing him the song of "The Owl that died of the Whooping-cough," together with divers other harmonious ditties, which in the quiet of the scene, and when replied to by the echoes of the frowning bluffs, were exquisitely toothsome to the ear of Mr. Littlejohn, as well as Pompey Ducklegs, who listened with his mouth wide open, after the

manner of gentlemen of colour. One of these was so congenial to his taste that he learned it by heart, and long time after used to sing it for Miss Virginia Dangerfield. It ran as follows, and we believe hath never before been stereotyped.

"Our wives we kiss'd, we journeyed west,
Over the mountains blue,
For there we were told there was land to be sold,
The like you never knew.
Over the Alleghany, over the Alleghany,
Our horses are good, we've an excellent road
Over the Alleghany.

And we bought us a boat, and set her afloat,
And down the river we glided,
And on every hand we saw excellent land,
Where none but the Ingens resided.
All on the Ohio, boys,
When the wind is ahead there's no more to be said,
All on the Ohio, boys.

Our neat little bark beats every ark
That lives on the Ohio, boys;
And along as you float you may shoot from the boat
Just what kind of game you please, boys;
For there it's no treat to have plenty to eat,
There's food on every tree, boys.
All on the Ohio, boys,
All on the Ohio, boys,
When the wind's ahead there's no more to be said,
We must off with our coats and row, boys."

It is affirmed that this ditty is in its primitive exuberance nearly as long as the Ohio, and that the boatmen, instead of measuring distances by their pipes, like the ancient Dutchmen of the Manhadoes, as fame reports; or as the Mussulmans do by hours, did always calculate the number of miles by the number of its verses. But the foregoing were all that the chanting Cherub Spooney could be prevailed upon to sing, or perhaps all he knew, notwithstanding Captain Sam Hugg threat-

in common times was some distance inland. Here they met a number of boats from various parts of the great Valley of the Mississippi, which had taken shelter from the increasing fury of the inundation, and were waiting till it subsided a little. A merrier set of rogues never congregated together, nor is it possible to describe the medley of characters and amusements exhibited in this out-of-the-way corner of the earth. Fiddling and dancing, gambling and tippling, contests of wit and contests of activity, strength, and bottom; trials of skill in shooting at a mark, and every wild and wayward eccentricity which animal spirits, freed from all restraint of fashion, custom, or prescription, could devise, were all displayed here with a degree of rank primitive luxuriance, such as the same race of man never exhibits but once in the course of its progress from the infancy of society to the period of final corruption and decay. They seemed to think that custom was often little better than a reverend error, or, at all events, that new situations authorized new modes of enjoyment.

In some boats were pigs, sheep, bacon, flour, &c., for New Orleans; in others cargoes of two legged live stock, going to settle at Bois Brulé, or Bob Ruly as they called it; in others boards and plank; in others cider and whiskey; in others Yankee notions of all kinds. Each had a pole sticking up, on which, instead of a sign, he had suspended a sample of his wares, provided they were amenable to such a display, and a complete fair was carried on for the time they remained together. Most of the boats had a fiddle on board, for these people delight in dancing and music; and in one of them was the Rev-

erend Lazarus Snortgrace, whose voice, as he exhorted these frolicksome sinners to repentance, towered above the uproar of obstreperous merriment which echoed through these vast solitudes. He called himself one of the ram's horns which blew down the walls of Jericho, and not without special reason, for his lungs were of leather, and his breath inexhaustible. But the greatest curiosity of this miscellaneous assemblage was a wight from New-England, whose boat contained a complete establishment for the shoeing of horses in all its branches. He was on a trading voyage as far down as New Orleans, and good luck befriend him say we, for the originality of his enterprise merits not only fortune but immortality.

After waiting here a few days, the waters having sufficiently spent their force to render the navigation safe, the cavalcade of boats prepared to depart on their several ways. Some for the east, some for the west, some for the north, and some for the south. They belonged many of them to places thousands of miles apart; they had met here by accident, and the chances were a hundred to one that they would never meet again. At the signal of the blowing of the trumpets, which echoed among the recesses of the hills, they set forth, and soon were floating down towards the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi. These trumpets at the time we speak of were of wood, and the tones might be mistaken for those of a French horn, so soft, so mellow in the distance, that we have sometimes been wrought almost to shed tears, at hearing them vibrating of a summer evening among the hills. They are used not only as signals, but for the purpose of ascertaining the position of the boats in those

dense fogs, which at certain seasons are so impenetrable, that Captain Sam Hugg swore a most original and humorous oath, that he had turned the edge of a razor in attempting to cut through one of them. True it is, as he affirmed "It was a bloody Yankee razor, and not to be wondered at." The sound is echoed from the bank of the river, and the time which elapses indicates to these shrewd observers the distance from shore. Thus Echo, in addition to her other attributes, may justly claim the appellation of the Goddess of the Mississippi Navigators.

At the point of junction between the Ohio and Kentucky rivers, the fleet of boats separated; the colonel and his party proceeding up the latter to their destined home, and the others down the former stream, the Lord knows where. And now began the severe toils of the boatmen. The stream was rapid, and the difficulties of ascent insurmountable to all human skill and perseverance save that of a Kentucky boatman, who everybody knows is amphibious, "half horse, half alligator." They placed their shoulders against the long poles, one end of which was loaded with iron, and making what was called a "reverend set," walked steadily to the stern of the broad-horn, propelling her forward at the same time. Sometimes this course was impracticable from the depth or rapidity of the current, and then came the tug of war. A rope was taken ashore, and fastened to a rock, or stump, or sapling, and by this the boat was dragged along. This process is called cordelleing, and it is inexpressibly slow, tedious, and laborious. More than once they came to a place, where, owing to a sudden angle of the river, or the projecting of some obstacle from the shore, they met

a current of such irresistible force as to wheel them entirely round, and send them down the stream several hundred yards.

Nothing could surpass the sad solitude of their voyage. The river pursued its course for the most part through a channel worn out of the limestone rock, perpendicular on either side, and so deep that except at midday the sun never shone on the dark waters. The gloom was increased by vast trees growing on the summit of the rocks, and whose branches overshadowed the abyss. Emerging at length from this twilight cavern, they came to a spot where the strata of rocks disappeared, and a paradise of nature opened to their view. It was an open forest of gigantic trees, occupying a rich level which extended a considerable distance on the river. No underwood grew upon these shady meadows, and the whole was one carpet of blossoms opening to the spring air.

"Here is the spot," said Bushfield, and so it was, as the colonel found on looking at his map and survey.

"I'm glad on't," quoth Captain Hugg, "for I'll be shot by an Ingen, if this isn't worse than cordelleing round the old sycamore."

The turn of the river had made a harbour for boats, and here they came to, landed their cargoes, and without delaying a moment, proceeded under the direction of Bushfield to erect tents and other temporary shelters for the party. The day was spent at these occupations, in which the boatmen willingly assisted, and in which Mr. Littlejohn distinguished himself by being particularly in the way, or, as Captain Sam said, "By always rowing up stream instead of down."

"Well, colonel," said that worthy, the next morning, "you're all comfortably settled now, and I think I'll let go the willows, and make tracks for Bob Ruly, where I belong; so good-by to you, and may you never want plenty of deer, wild turkeys, and whiskey."

The colonel paid his fare, and gave him a liberal present besides, whereat the captain was so exalted, that he swore there was no backing out in him, "he was a real screamer of a feller."

The amphibious men now departed, and floating down the stream to the music of Cherub Spooney's favourite air of "The Owl that died of the Whooping-cough," disappeared in a turn of the river. As the echoes of their wooden trumpet gradually died away, our travellers felt that the last link which bound them to the distant world was severed.

CHAPTER X.

"Now the log hut, erst haunt of sturdy men,
Degenerate lot! becomes the porker's pen;
While stately houses rise on every side,
The good man's comfort, and the good dame's pride;
To cultivated fields the forest chang'd,
And where the wild beasts, now the tame ones rang'd;
The curling smoke amid the woods was seen;
The village church now whiten'd on the green,
And by its side arose the little school,
Where rod and reason lusty urchins rule,
Whose loud-repeated lessons might be heard,
Whene'er along the road a wight appear'd."

Our intention is not to detail the particulars of that struggle which, in these rugged regions of nature's empire, ever takes place between the patient industry of man and her wild luxuriance; nor to trace the progress of a new settlement, from the first wound given to the primeval forest, to the golden harvest-field; from the rude log-cabin, to the stately double house, and all its ambitious accompaniments; which change, in the figurative style of the west, is yclept "throwing off the moccasins." Suffice it to say, that the traveller who some ten years after the sound of the first axe was heard in these woods chanced to visit it, would have been charmed with the little settlement of Colonel Dangerfield, its rural beauties, and its air of rustic opulence. The smoke rising above the tall trees, the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, the tinkling of bells, the strokes of the woodman's axe, the crash of the falling tree, and

the long echoes of the hunter's gun would announce to him that he was coming to the abodes of civilized men. He would behold a village rising in the midst of crystal springs, bursting from the sides of little knolls, or from under hoary rocks; fields of grain springing up with a luxuriance that returned to the labourer a hundredfold, enclosed by log fences, and bristling with girdled trees towering to the skies. Orchards loaded with fruits, gardens full of vegetables and flowers, would next greet him on the spot which a few years before was the abode of the buffalo and wild deer, the hunting-ground of the Indian; and he might say to himself, "What are all the temporary privations and sufferings of a few short years in the wilderness, ending in rural happiness like this, compared to debts and poverty, degradation and dependence? The enterprising emigrant who comes hither with a few hundred dollars, or perhaps with nothing but a strong arm and a strong heart, soon gains independence for himself and his children. In the crowded haunts of men his genius has no room to exert itself; he is elbowed aside by those who are on the march before him, or who have already gained possession of advantages of which he cannot partake. But here he has elbow-room, and here it is that spirit and enterprise find their appropriate world."

Such, or something like them, were in reality the reflections of a traveller who, one fine spring afternoon, when the twilight was lending its mellow lustre to the smiling landscape, rode into the town of Dangerfieldville, a formidable name assuredly; but the colonel had followed the fashion of the west, where, if a man has a name as long as that of Aldibirontiphoskiphornio, it goes hard

but he will tack a *ville* to its tail when he lays the foundation of a city which is to become the great mart of the western world. The young man bestrode a blooded horse, which is indispensable in Kentucky to the character of a gentleman, and which horse carried a portmanteau seemingly well filled with "plunder," on which was strapped a brown camlet cloak with a purple velvet cape,—we like to be particular in these matters, in imitation of our betters,—and which brown camlet cloak with a purple velvet cape was surmounted by a blue, or perhaps it might have been a green, silk umbrella, on which was written in black ink the name of Dudley Rainsford, which we will venture to suggest might peradventure have been that of the traveller himself. He wore a gray frock, with covered buttons, and buttoned with a single button, the fourth from the bottom; a single-breasted vest of buff Marseilles, with two pockets, probably to carry his money in; a pair of white drilling pantaloons, with a spot of ink on the left leg, a little below the knee; and a pair of boots, the toes of which were as wide as a broad-horn, and which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, were right and left.

His horse, which seemed almost worn out with the day's journey, was an iron-gray, about fifteen hands high, with a star of five points in his forehead, three black feet, and one white one, which, if we mistake not, make four. He had two ears, one on the right, the other on the left side of his head; a pair of nostrils, one close by the other, and looking for all the world like twins; a white mane hanging on the right side of his neck; and two eyes, which looked exactly as if he could see out of them. Just below his right ear was a spot

of hair rather inclining to white, which might or might not be occasioned by some unaccountable cause; and, from his slavering a little at the mouth, it might be predicated of him that he had been eating too heartily of red clover. He was guided by a snaffle-bridle with a plated bit, neither very new nor very old; and his saddle was wrought of the skin of a pig. We hope the reader will not be out of patience with this particular inventory of goods, chattels, accoutrements, &c. &c. &c. This traveller is destined to be the hero of our tale; and he must be but an illiterate person who doth not know the fashion of the times requires that a hero should be delineated with the same minute particularity with which we describe a stolen horse, an absconding swindler, or a runaway negro in an advertisement.

Mr. Rainsford was slowly passing a large mansion, with a piazza from one end to the other, and bearing marks of opulence as well as taste, when he was accosted by a voice as follows, in a tone of good-humoured banter,—

"Hullo! I say, stranger, did you ever happen to see a snail in your travels?"

"I rather suspect I have," replied the stranger, stopping his tired horse; "what then?"

"Why, then, I reckon you must have met him; for you never could have overtook him at that rate, any how."

The stranger again pricked his horse into a walk, when the man of the long piazza called out,—

"Hullo! stranger, you're barking up the wrong tree; what business have you to pass this house?"

"What's that to you?" replied Mr. Rainsford, rather in a huff at being so unceremoniously in-

terrogated, and presuming this was some importunate innkeeper who wanted his custom.

"I'll tell you directly, stranger; but, first and foremost, let me ask if you ant rather fresh in these parts; for I can see with half an eye you don't understand trap."

"Trap! I won't be trapped by you, I promise you."

"You won't, eh?—we'll see that directly, I reckon. Colonel," said he, calling to some one within, "colonel, I believe here's an unaccountable sort of character, for he seems afraid to stop at a gentleman's house when invited in a civil way. Come out, and put the grace of our Lord upon him, for you know you're a justice of peace."

This address was followed by the appearance of a gentleman rather beyond the middle age, whom we shall not describe, because we hope the reader will recognise him at the first glance as his old acquaintance, Colonel Dangerfield. He accosted the traveller politely, and apologized for the detention of his friend Bushfield.

"I believe you don't know the custom of this village,—I may say of the whole country. No traveller passes this or any other house without stopping, unless he can give a good and sufficient reason for such a gross piece of neglect."

"I wish to find an inn, sir; can you direct me to one?"

"Whew!" cried Bushfield; "an inn!—why, every house is an inn here, except that the landlord don't charge any thing to his customers. I say, stranger, where did you come from, that you expect to find taverns here in Old Kentuck?"

"You will alight, and spend the night here, sir, if you please," said Colonel Dangerfield; "I shall

be proud to receive you, and you will find no public-house within a hundred miles of this in the direction you are going."

"My good sir, I cannot think of imposing on your hospitality. I was recommended here as to a place where I could purchase a good tract of land at a reasonable price; for I design to settle in this country if I can be suited, and was looking out for an inn when this gentleman accosted me."

"Another new settler!" grumbled Bushfield; "the country will soon be as full of people as a prairie is of wolves; there'll be no such thing as turning round in it without hitting some feller's elbow. I must cut dirt soon for some place where there's more room."

The colonel repeated his invitation with such a frank cordiality, that the stranger at length, on being satisfied that there was no place of public entertainment in the village, accepted it, and, alighting from his horse, was ushered into a large room plainly yet comfortably furnished, and occupied by several persons of both sexes.

"A stranger," said Colonel Dangerfield.

"My name is Rainsford."

"O, never mind, sir; the name of stranger is enough for us."

"Why, where was this genius raised?" said Bushfield to himself; "a wild turkey would know better. Whenever a man goes to tell me his name when he enters my house, I calculate he thinks I suspect him of being a horse-stealer."

The company rose when the stranger was introduced, and the colonel presented him to his wife, who was still a comely and genteel matron, for the feeling of good breeding is independent of the mere forms of fashion; to his son Leonard,

now a tall, straight, noble-looking youth; and to his daughter Virginia, now grown to the full size of graceful womanhood; not forgetting also Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, who on the entrance of Rainsford had risen from three chairs, on one of which he sat, on another reclined his arm, and on the third supported his left leg, after the fashion of Old Virginia, the mother of presidents, and the parent of a mighty state.

"And so," said Colonel Dangerfield, after a few preliminary compliments, "you are looking for a settlement somewhere in this part of the country?"

"I came with an intention of residing in it, certainly; but I fear I am not qualified for a farmer."

"Can you cut down a tree as big round as all out doors in less time than you can look at it?" asked Bushfield.

"I fear not," said the other, smiling; "I never attempted to handle an axe but once that I recollect, and then I almost cut off my toe."

"Ah! you won't do here, unless maybe you can trail a deer, and shoot a bear in a cane-brake so thick that a mustard-seed shot couldn't find the way through it without grazing the bark."

"I can do neither of these things; but perhaps I can learn."

"Learn! you are too old for that, stranger. A man must begin with the eggshell on him, as the partridges learn to run, and get up before daylight many a year in and year out, before he can get to be worth much—I mean in the way of living in these parts."

"I have not been accustomed to such enterprises, nor can I perform such feats," said the young traveller.

"Then what in the name of old Daniel Boone

brought you here, stranger?" said Bushfield, bluntly.

"I scarcely know myself," said the stranger; and Virginia, who happened to be looking at him at the moment, saw a cloud pass over his face, and detected a long-drawn sigh.

Tea was now brought in as a treat to the stranger, and the conversation took another turn.

CHAPTER XI.

A short Retrospect.

NINE years—the number of the Muses, and doubtless for that reason selected by Horace as the period during which every discreet author ought to keep his piece in reserve before he ventures to give it to the world,—a precept to which we ourselves have paid particular attention in respect to this work,—nine years had elapsed since Colonel Dangerfield had first pitched his tent in the wilderness. In that time, such is the magic of industry and enterprise directed by the arts of civilized life, a complete change had been in rapid progress, from the wild luxuriance of nature to the rich redundant blessings of cultivated fields and comfortable abodes, the plainness of whose outsides was gloriously contrasted by the liberal hospitality within. The first year of his arrival he was only the lord of a wilderness, the possession of which was disputed equally by the wild animals and the red men who hunted them. By degrees, however, the former had become more rare, and the latter had receded before the irresistible influence of the "wise white man," who, wheresoever he goes, to whatever region of the earth, whether east or west, north or south, carries with him his destiny, which is to civilize the world, and rule it afterwards.

While the grain was growing luxuriantly in the fields, and the flowers beginning to bloom in

the garden of Colonel Dangerfield, another and a fairer flower was expanding into rich maturity within his walls. Little Virginia was now a tall girl, straight as one of the high trees of the western forests, though not quite so lofty, and graceful as an Indian maid. She had never seen a superior, nor ever felt the miserable consciousness of inferiority, which is the parent of that affectation which destroys all grace of motion and action, and takes away the dignity of self-possession. A person conscious of equality with all around will seldom, if ever, be awkward, embarrassed, or ungraceful.

Virginia was the only daughter of the patron, the head of the settlement, and by far the most wealthy man within a circuit of a hundred miles. The vast tract of land, for which he had given a few shillings an acre, had increased in value almost a hundredfold, and the owner of Powhatan was now the proprietor of half a dozen townships. There was something, too, in the character and services of Colonel Dangerfield which, independently of his wealth, drew on him the regard and respect of the settlers in this region. He had been their leader in more than one of those Indian wars which preceded the last expiring efforts of the kings of the woods, and which gave to the now fertile fields of Kentucky the poetical name of "the dark and bloody ground." Under the tuition of Bushfield, who still lived, notwithstanding his hair-breadth escapes if we had leisure to record them would baffle all the creations of the wildest fancy, he had become an expert and enterprising woodland warrior; and the former indolence of his character had been strengthened and invigorated by the presence of eternal dangers, as

well as the necessity of perpetual exertion. Yet still, with all these claims to distinction, which were acknowledged with gratitude, there was in almost every respect a perfect equality in social intercourse between the different members of the little community. Any airs of superiority on the part of the colonel and his family would have been met by a prompt denial of their claims; for they had shared dangers, privations, and sufferings together, and these vicissitudes had made all equal. There was no distinction but that of the honest man and the rogue, the brave man and the coward. In no situation, indeed, do we feel the necessity of that union of honest men, which is the *beau ideal* of the social system, so much as in one of these parent settlements, which the arm of justice and the restraints of the laws have not yet been able to reach.

Such a state of existence at once entails the necessity of an association among the honest portion of the community for the defence of their rights and the punishment of aggressors. Hence originated the institution called the *Regulators*, formerly common on the remote frontiers, where the influence of the general government was not felt, and where there were as yet no local authorities. These were a body of the principal settlers, who combined for the purposes of self-defence, and who became of necessity both the judges and the executors of the forest laws. Horse-stealing was the great crime in those days, and when an occurrence of this kind took place the Regulators set out in pursuit; and prompt and severe was the punishment inflicted on the culprit. These associations, so indispensable in a region without laws or magistrates, have been distorted by igno-

rant, or prejudiced, or malicious writers into bands of desperate outlaws, congregated for the purpose of levying *black-mail*, committing the most wanton outrages, and violating in fact all those rights which it was the first and only object to defend. Without doubt, these conservators of the peace and property of the honest and industrious sometimes exceeded the measure of justice, as it might have been safely administered in a regularly organized community; but it is obvious that, without some such association, the first pioneers of civilization might have become impracticable and dangerous outlaws; and it is equally obvious that where neither jails, nor guardhouses, nor any of the means of securing criminals exist, punishments must be prompt as well as corporeal. But we have been diverted from the course of our story by a wish to give a simple explanation of what has been so entirely misrepresented.

The daughter of Colonel Dangerfield had been brought up among the surrounding villagers on the principle of perfect equality, in so far as to recognise their equal claim to an exchange of all the courtesies of social intercourse; and let it be recollected they were not ignorant people, for it is not the vulgar of our country that seek their fortunes in the west. It is the men of long reaching views; those who have sagacity to perceive, talent to win the advantages which such a course presents, and fortitude to incur the sacrifices necessary to obtain them. There were among this little band of adventurers men from New-England, Virginia, and elsewhere, who had been educated at colleges, and carried diplomas with them into the wilderness; and there were women, who, if not accomplished in

the arts of music, painting, or dancing, were of as cultivated minds, as delicate apprehensions, as pure morals and habits, as ever figured in courtly drawing-rooms, or saw themselves in full-length mirrors. It is true that the vicissitudes of a new and original course of existence, the trials, hardships, and dangers of succeeding generations, and the plenty of elbow-room enjoyed by the descendants of these emigrants, have somewhat changed the characters of the men, but they have produced a race which, take them all in all, with all their faults and eccentricities, as physical and intellectual beings, we do verily believe, are not to be surpassed by any that ever existed. There is, however, a wild originality, a wayward humour, a blunt sincerity, a plain-spoken freedom, and an independence of thought as well as action, which we have seen produce most ludicrous effects upon a delicate apprehensive dandy, or a self-sufficient gentleman conscious of his individual importance. In short, they are the last men in the world to bow to authority or prescription, in literature, taste, dress, or philosophy; and will just as readily demur to the despotism of their tailor as to the system of the universe.

But the women of the west, particularly of Old Kentucky! How shall we describe them, and most especially our heroine, the tall, graceful, mild, tender, independent, high-spirited, Virginia Dangerfield? They are to those of our Atlantic cities, what the wild deer is to the lamb; both gentle, charming, graceful, and of a most delicate relish; yet one possessing a character of peculiar wildness, and exhibiting a certain air of careless grace, the product of freedom from restraint; the other, sweet to the eye and to the imagination

too, yet not quite so piquant, not quite so—so—what shall we say, so exquisitely compounded as to distinguish the peculiar charms of both without doing injustice to either?—not quite so much of the venison flavour. The free enjoyment of the air, and of exercise on horseback more especially, to which the women of the west were at that time so constantly accustomed, seems to produce similar effects with the discipline of the boarding school and the drawing-room. The result of each is a graceful deportment; but the first is most graceful, because it is unstudied and free from affectation or mannerism.

Virginia grew up in the pure air and amid the pure springs of a Kentucky paradise, which every true Kentuckian will swear beats every other paradise that exists, or ever did exist, in this mundane terrene. Her eyes were those of a half-tamed fawn, tender and apprehensive, spirited, yet expressing the most perfect gentleness of character. Her skin was as transparent as the fountains of pure water out of which she drank, and though the general hue of her face was pale, it was delightful to see how the blood ran on errands from her heart to her face, when agitated by a sudden impulse.

The state of the country at the time, and the disinclination of Mrs. Dangerfield to part with her only daughter, had prevented Virginia from acquiring any of the usual accomplishments of young women of her expectations in life; but her mind was as far from being uncultivated as her manners were from being rustic. We have said that Mrs. Dangerfield was an accomplished woman, by which we meant, of a cultivated mind and graceful manners. Music, dancing, and other

accomplishments now so common, were in the days of her youth not accessible to the ladies of the United States, especially those who resided in the country. But still the attainment of all the truly ladylike embellishments, those which radically influence the mind and manners, were within reach of the wealthy. Mrs. Dangerfield had availed herself of these, and was in all respects what we, old fashioned as we are, should call a perfectly well-bred woman.

Her example, for ever before Virginia, could not fail of being all powerful in the formation of her manners, for what magic is like that of the influence of a kind, attentive, sensible, persevering mother, over the early youth of her children. She is the watchful sentinel whose vigilance never sleeps, never relaxes for a single moment. She sees the enemy approaching in ambush afar off, and sounds the alarum to each intruding emissary of mischief. The latent fault, the budding passion, the early wilfulness, the first transgression in morals or in manners, is instantly checked by the sleepless monitor; and well and truly may it be said, that not more surely does the child draw its first nourishment from the bosom of its mother, than it receives its first bias of good or evil from her early precepts and example.

Bred up in this sequestered spot, at a distance from the great whirlpool of life, Virginia knew little of the world except that little portion around her, and what the occasional perusal of a few books afforded. She read little, but thought much, and there is no doubt but that habitual reflection is a richer fountain for the mind than books, and contributes far more to its strength and originality. Without intimate associates of her own age and

sphere, she passed much of her time alone, and solitude is the nurse of the imagination. Her spirits were naturally lively, yet there were intervals when they subsided into quiet repose, or sunk into a temporary abstraction, during which her fancy expatiated in a world of its own creation.

Leonard Dangerfield was two years older than his sister, and a thrifty young sapling with a little of the outside bark on. He had been sent to one of the new colleges, which had lately sprung up among the girdled trees, yclept cities; had taken a degree, and was held in the village of Dangerfieldville to be a whole team of a young fellow, who could handle a rifle, make a speech, or tree a rackoon with any he man that ever breathed in all out of doors.

Master Ulysses Littlejohn still continued his old system of killing time, but complained sorely that he had now nobody to assist him, the colonel being too much occupied in his private and public duties to bear him company. On his first coming to the wilderness he had signalized himself greatly, as he said, by shooting a buffalo, and had lived upon the glory of this achievement ever since. But there were some doubts as to the accuracy of his report, for when Old Pompey went to the spot described by Ulysses to bring home the game, it had disappeared in a miraculous manner. The sage Ducklegs hereupon disbelieved the whole story, and many were the innuendoes he afterwards threw out on the subject of buffaloes running away after they had been shot stone dead, all of which were received by Master Littlejohn with marked disapprobation.

"Ducklegs," would he say, "you don't know a B from a buffalo's foot."

"Ah, may be so, Massa Leetlejohn; but old nigger know buffalo from no buffalo for all dat."

Having renewed the reader's acquaintance with the principal personages, we shall now jog on with our story.

CHAPTER XII.

Chit chat, and all that.

THE conversation at the tea-table, around which the whole company were seated in a sociable old-fashioned style, turned on the project of Rainsford forming a settlement in the township bordering on the domains of Colonel Dangerfield. That gentleman gave him the benefit of his experience and advice on the subject, and Littlejohn enjoined him forthwith to lay the foundation of a great city, just at the junction of two streams, both of which might be made navigable by act of congress. But the stranger, though he professed an intention to establish a colony, seemed so indifferent about the means, that Bushfield began to suspect he was "playing 'possum," that is to say enacting the hypocrite, for some purpose or other he could not fathom.

Colonel Dangerfield also thought it somewhat singular that a man should travel all the way from the seacoast to settle new lands, and be so indifferent about it. He threw a penetrating glance at the young man, but it was met by a countenance so interesting, so full of melancholy depression, that he felt his heart yearn towards him, and every trace of suspicion vanish from his mind. It was a countenance that seemed familiar with sorrows and suffering, full of anxiety, apprehension, almost despair. There was something in his voice, too, expressive of hopeless despond-

ency, and, when he spoke, it was as though he little cared whether to speak or be silent.

"You are fatigued," said the colonel, "and don't seem quite well; had you not better retire, Mr. Rainsford?"

"O, not at all, sir; if you permit me, I will remain till your usual hour. Though I have rode far to-day, I am not the least tired."

And then, as if conscious that he owed his best exertions to repay the hospitality of his host, he rallied himself, and entered into conversation with a spirit, intelligence, and occasionally an eloquence that delighted everybody, most especially Mr. Bushfield, who pronounced him afterwards to be fit for a congress man, if he could only fight as well as he could talk.

The subject, we need hardly say, was politics; for we have heard an observing old gentleman affirm, that when you see three men talking together in the United States, it is ten to one the subject is politics, five to one religion, and three to one making a speculation. They were discussing the matter of a new constitution, a species of domestic manufacture exceedingly common, when an old Indian called the Black Warrior came in without ceremony, and took his seat in a corner of the room. Some years previous to the time of which we are speaking, and when the Indians still carried on their depredations upon the new settlements, the Black Warrior had been protected on some occasion by Colonel Dangerfield from the fury of a party of white men who had taken him prisoner. When in process of time the irresistible wave of the white population had scattered the remnants of the Indian tribes on the wings of the wind, the Black Warrior, who

had become obnoxious to his people by his gratitude to Colonel Dangerfield, preferred remaining in the vicinity of the village. Here the colonel built him a hut, and administered to his wants so far as was necessary, for he was still an expert hunter, and he and Leonard were often absent a whole day together in the forests, chasing the deer. He was accustomed to come and go at the house of the colonel without ceremony, and it frequently happened that he did so without uttering a single word, except a short salutation. At other times he would join in the conversation so far as a single remark, or an assent or dissent. But he was a man of few words and of imperturbable gravity, as indeed are all his kind, so much so that the good Quakers, who first settled New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, always called them the "sad people."

It happened that Bushfield, who was a man capable of finding fault with singular discretion, was denouncing the general government for not taking sufficient care to protect the exposed frontier from the depredations of the Pottawotomies, the Kickapoos, and other odd-named fellows.

"If I was President of the United States, I'd make them smell brimstone through a nail-hole."

"Eh, good!" said the Black Warrior, after waiting to see that nobody replied; for the savages in this respect set an example to the civilized man; "good! you white men all cowards."

"What's that you say, you old tan-coloured varmint?" cried Bushfield.

"Let him say on," said the colonel.

"I say," continued the Black Warrior, with perfect coolness and indifference, "I say you white men all cowards. Your whole government is

founded in cowardice. You give up your freedom of action; you fetter yourselves with laws till you don't know which way to turn, because you can't take care of yourselves; you give away your money to make roads and bridges, because you are afraid to travel through the woods and swim over rivers; and you pay taxes for soldiers to come and protect you. Huh!—the Indians protect themselves; they neither give away their money nor their liberty to pay other people for taking care of them."

Rainsford was quite struck with this new view of the social system, and entered into some little discussion with the old natural philosopher, in the course of which he took occasion to insist upon the superior comforts and conveniences of civilized life.

"Huh—yes!" said the Black Warrior, "all your lives are spent in slaving to get things that we have learned to do without. The Indian is the only true gentleman; the white man is the Indian's nigger; he works to make guns and blankets for us."

"Niggers!" cried Bushfield, jumping up in a rage; "the Kentuckians niggers!"

The old redskin replied to this only with a significant "huh!" and, lighting his pipe, departed without ceremony to his hut in the forest.

"I never see or think of these people but I pity them," said Rainsford.

"Pity the Ingens! for what?" answered Bushfield, warmly; "I'll tell you what, stranger, if you had lived in Old Kentuck as long as I have, and seen what I have seen, you'd talk other guess, I reckon. When I first remember this country, nobody could sleep of nights for fear of the In-

gens, who were so thick you couldn't see the trees for them. There isn't a soul in all Kentucky but has lost some one of his kin in the Ingen wars, or had his house burnt over his head by these creturs. When they plough their fields, they every day turn up the bones of their own colour and kin who have been scalped, and tortured, and whipped, and starved by these varmints, that are ten thousand times more bloodthirsty than tigers, and as cunning as 'possums. I, stranger, I am the last of my family and name; the rest are all gone, and not one of them died by the hand of his Maker. My grandfather fell and was scalped at Old Chilicothe; my uncle was massacred at Ruddle's Station, after he had surrendered; my father lost his life at the Blue Licks, when all Kentucky was in mourning; my two brothers were kidnapped when they were boys, and never heard of afterwards; and—and—my mother and sister were burnt up in our house, while all the men were out to catch a horse-thief, by a party of Shawanoes. They barred the doors and windows, and my little sister loaded the gun, which my mother fired as fast as she loaded. They killed two of the varmints; the others set fire to the house, and—and—J—s! that any white man should pity an Ingen here on 'the dark and bloody ground!'"

There was an energy, a mixture of wild pathos and singularity in this effusion of Bushfield exceedingly affecting, and Rainsford could not help acknowledging, that to judge rightly of the conduct of mankind in all situations, we should know the necessity under which they laboured, and the provocations to which they were exposed. There are none so virtuous as people out of the reach of temptation, and none so forgiving as those who have no motives for revenge. On retiring to the

room prepared for his reception, the young man seated himself at an open window, and indulged in a train of melancholy reflections. The moon rode high in the heavens, and threw her mild lustre over the quiet scene, interrupted only by the distant howlings of the wild animals of the forest, that sometimes approached near enough to rouse the watchdogs, whose deep-mouthed warnings echoed far and wide. The lofty girdled trees, stripped of their foliage, and bristling the surrounding fields like the tall masts of first rate men-of-war, gave an air of desolation to the landscape, which was bounded at a distance by a dark wall of gloomy forest. He thought of the past, and it presented nothing but sad realities; he thought of the future, and it furnished only gloomy forebodings. "Better were it," thought he, "that I should become at once, what I shall be ere long, as sure as the fate which has for three generations hung over my unhappy race will one day be mine. I should then be at least unconscious of my miseries; but now the very anticipation of what too surely I shall soon be, is a thousand times worse than if I really were what I anticipate. One year more, and then—oh! gracious Providence! what shall I be then?" Unconsciously he groaned, in the agony of his spirit; and Virginia, who was likewise contemplating the scene from an adjoining window, overheard him. Her curiosity and sympathy were both equally excited; but feeling she was intruding on the sorrows of a stranger, she quietly retired to her repose. Yet she could not sleep for a while, and as she lay wondering what might be the cause of such an expression of suffering, she could hear the stranger pacing to and fro across his chamber for hours.

CHAPTER XIII.

The sudden departure of Rainsford, and the mysterious deportment of Master Zeno Paddock.

The morning was cheerful and smiling, and Mr. Rainsford appeared at breakfast apparently in good spirits; but Virginia, who by some newly-awakened impulse began to feel an interest in a young man who groaned and walked his chamber at night, thought she saw in his face the haggard emblems of long suffering. His features were regular and singularly expressive, but it was not altogether a pleasing expression. The lines of his forehead bore the marks of habitual contraction; his complexion was of an ashy hue; his cheek and eyes somewhat more sunken than beseemed a man so young; and the latter exhibited a cast of fearful apprehension, as though they were watching some secret enemy stealing upon him unawares. His person was of the middle size; his limbs well formed; but there was nothing of the brisk vigour of youth in his action, which was languid, careless, and dilatory. His voice was musical, but it was the music of melancholy.

Suspicion is the product of experience; naturally, our race is full of liberal confidence. In the early stages of society there is little temptation to fraud, and, consequently, less occasion for apprehension; for men have little to lose or gain by it, and hence, in proportion to the simplicity of manners and modes of life will be the

extent of confidence and hospitality. Rainsford was accordingly received unquestioned at the house of Colonel Dangerfield, not only because the colonel was liberal, but that in this sequestered region, as there was no temptation to attract rogues, so there had been no examples to create suspicion.

After breakfast, Colonel Dangerfield proposed taking a ride to view the lands in the neighbourhood.

"I feel an interest in your settling among us, and long to see you getting about it. If you bestir yourself manfully, in two years you will have every thing comfortable about you."

"Two years!" echoed Rainsford, with a sigh.

"What, are you so impatient you can't wait two years? It is but a short time."

"Too long for me," said the other, apparently entirely abstracted from the scene and the occasion.

As they rode to the spot which was the object of their visit, the colonel spoke of what was necessary to be done in the first stage of a new settlement, and entered on a variety of details, such as he thought might interest his guest; but his mind seemed to be wandering to other subjects. Sometimes he did not answer at all, and at others nothing or very little to the purpose.

"Stranger," said Bushfield, who accompanied them on his way home, he not being a resident in the village of Dangerfieldville, "stranger, you don't seem on the track of what the colonel says. But I'll tell you what, a man that comes to settle in these parts must be wide awake, and rip and tear away like a horse in a cane-brake. But somehow you don't appear to mind what's said to you,

any more than my old horse Shavetail, who lost his hearing at the last general training, they fired at such a rate."

"I believe, indeed, I was guilty of the ill manners of thinking of something else; I am apt to be absent," said Rainsford, with a melancholy smile.

"What! you're one of the booky fellers that think of one thing while they are talking about another. There's an old varmint at Frankford Academy, as I heard, that one day cut his forefinger to a sharp point instead of a pencil, for want of thinking what he was about."

"What a beautiful country!" exclaimed Rainsford, as they ascended an eminence which commanded a vast expanse of all the charming varieties of nature; forests of primeval growth, rich meadows, extensive plains, swelling hills gradually rising into mountains, and little rivers winding their way as if they neither knew nor cared whither they were going; "what a beautiful country is Kentucky!"

"Beautiful?—it's transcendent! Yes, if Old Kentucky was cut off from all the rest of the earth, she'd be a world within herself," answered Bushfield.

A spot was selected for the residence of Rainsford on the bank of a little stream which found its way to the Kentucky River through a rich meadow imbosomed in the hills.

"'Tis a little paradise," said he; "but I fear it is too distant from any other habitation."

"Distant!" cried Bushfield, "not at all; why, you and I shall be nigh neighbours. Don't you see that blue mountain yonder? I live just on the other side, and it's only fifteen miles off."

'That's rather too far for me; I don't like to be alone."

"Not like to be alone! why, where under the sun did you spring from, stranger? Now, for my part, I don't want any other company than my dog, my rifle, and plenty of game. I never wish to see the smoke of my neighbour's chimney. You'll have a smart chance of company at Dangerfieldville, which isn't above six miles off, as I should calculate."

After a few minutes' reflection, Mr. Rainsford assented to the location of his house, observing, it was after all, perhaps, of little consequence where he pitched his tent, to the great disgust of Bushfield, who set him down in his own mind as a fellow that hadn't fire enough in him to prevent his being frostbitten in the dog-days.

According to the custom of the backwoods, the inhabitants of the village turned out the next day, and before the sun was set had built him a stately log house of two rooms and a garret, all neat and complete, and fit for a king. But in these new countries it is much more difficult to furnish than to build a house, and it became necessary to resort to some of the older settlements before his mansion could be prepared for his reception.

"You've got a cage, said Mr. Littlejohn, "and now all you want is a bird to sing in it;" and he looked significantly at the fair Virginia, whose head was full of the groans and perturbed midwatch pacings she had heard the night before. The damsel blushed deeply, while a singularly inexplicable expression passed like a cloud over the face of the young man as he replied,—

"I fear no bird will ever sing in cage of mine, except the screech-owl or the raven."

"I shall hear you sing another tune before long. Why, what will you do, who have been raised where people stand as thick as canes in a cane-brake, in a house all alone by yourself? Miss Dangerfield shall recommend you to a little bird that sings like a Virginia nightingale."

"Miss Dangerfield will do no such thing," replied Virginia, and left the room in a flurry.

Rainsford walked forth to the house of one Zeno Paddock,* who officiated in the twofold capacity of schoolmaster and political oracle to young and old of the village of Dangerfieldville. His great ambition was to set up a newspaper, but he could not yet bring the matter about to his satisfaction. Here the young gentleman staid so long that Mr. Littlejohn wondered what he could have to say to that eternal busybody, whom he despised from the bottom of his heart, inasmuch as he was not content with attending to his own business, which was bad enough in all conscience, but interfered with that of all his neighbours. There was nothing Ulysses held so cheap as a man who had a decided taste

* On scanning our work a little more critically, after completing the story, it for the first time occurred to us that the sketch of Zeno Paddock, in his compound character of schoolmaster and editor, might possibly be construed into an attempt to throw ridicule on these two classes. We take this opportunity of entirely disclaiming any such purpose; our object having been simply to portray a character from nature, such as without doubt has existed, and we dare say still exists, in situations similar to that in which we have imagined him. We should be the last in the world to attempt weakening the influence or undermining the respectability of two professions to which the present age owes, and posterity will owe, more, perhaps, than to any others whatever. Yet still, there certainly are among them persons whose follies and whose ignorance diminish the just influence of the whole; and to ridicule these is to vindicate, not to undervalue, those who are objects of respect and consideration.

for any species of employment except that of killing time. Zeno was a huge devourer of newspapers, and was generally found with one in his hand at every interval of leisure.

One evening, some ten days afterwards, all the family, with the exception of Leonard, who had gone to the state capital to finish the study of the law, was gathered together. Rainsford announced his intention of not taking possession of his new establishment until the ensuing spring, as he should not like to sojourn alone in the wilderness during the dreary season of winter. The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of having him for a welcome guest some time longer.

Mr. Rainsford appeared much affected. "You have been kind, very kind to me. A stranger, and without the least claim to your hospitality, you have received and entertained me as a son or a brother. But—but—I do not mean to spend the winter in this part of the world."

Virginia made a sudden movement of surprise, and the colonel exclaimed, "Indeed! I am sorry for it."

"No; I have thought—I never was at New Orleans. I should like to see the banks of the great river Mississippi; and besides, I can furnish myself with several articles which I confess my house stands wofully in need of. I shall return early in the spring, and then set myself seriously to work, clearing land and raising corn."

Nothing was said against this arrangement, and in a few days Rainsford was on his way to the Ohio, whence he meant to embark in the first convenient conveyance on his destination. He took leave of the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield

with the deepest expressions of obligation; of Virginia with the frankness of a brother, while she parted from him with the only appearance of affectation she had ever been known to exhibit. She was in the highest spirits, and laughed excessively, particularly where there was no occasion.

"Can I bring you any thing from New Orleans?" said he.

"Let me see—O yes, bring me a parrot, or a monkey, or something to amuse me; for really, Mr. Rainsford, I have been almost tired to death this summer for want of agreeable company. How I should like to be always in a crowd!" This was a great story.

"There are plenty of paroquets in the woods."

"Yes, but they are so dull, they don't talk, and what is a parrot or a man that can't speak?"

"Well, Miss Dangerfield, I shall certainly attend to your wishes. I will endeavour to find you a suitable companion among the parrots or the monkeys."

There was something in this little dialogue that grated harshly on the feelings of both, and a pause ensued, which lasted until Rainsford was summoned to proceed on his voyage down the river.

"Farewell, madam, and farewell, colonel," said he, with deep emotion, "and farewell, Miss Dangerfield;" and his voice assumed a tone of melancholy kindness.

"Good-by, Mr. Rainsford," said Virginia; "don't forget the parrot and the monkey."

Virginia was so merry for at least an hour after his departure, that her mother could not help noticing her extraordinary vivacity.

"One would think you rejoiced at Mr. Rains-

ford's going away, and yet I cannot help regretting to lose his society next winter. He was not lively, but sensible and well informed, and when he did talk it was very agreeably."

"Well, for my part," said the young lady, "I think he was the stupidest young man I ever met with in all my life."

"My dear Virginia, you must excuse me, but I don't believe one word you have said."

Virginia laughed, and ran away to the river's side; but the boat in which Rainsford embarked had already disappeared in a turn of the river, and she returned home after a long lingering walk, in a mood so quiet and sedate, that she scarcely spoke a word all the rest of the day.

Hardly had Rainsford departed when Zeno Paddock made his appearance, with a newspaper in his hand, and asked to speak with Colonel Dangerfield in private. Their conference lasted rather longer than was customary with the colonel, who generally eschewed the company of Zeno. What was its import he did not think proper to disclose; but he was observed to be absent and thoughtful all the rest of the day, contrary to his usual habits, for he was a man of great vivacity of character. Zeno marched off with an air of great importance, occasionally stopping to look at his newspaper, and nodding his head significantly as he carefully folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"I suppose that varlet wanted you to assist him in setting up his newspaper?" said Littlejohn, wishing to sound the colonel.

"It was about a newspaper," replied the other, and taking horse, rode out without asking the company of his friend.

"There's some mystery in this matter," quoth Littlejohn, and he went to consult Pompey the Great, who still lived in all the dignity of aristocracy, and was as tenacious of the honour of the family as ever.

"I'll tell you what," said Pompey; "'spose he want massa to scribe to he paper."

"Pooh! nonsense."

"Well den, 'spose he want to insult him bout Massa Leonard setting up for member of 'sembly."

"Pish! do you think he'd consult anybody but me in matters of such consequence?"

"Well den, 'spose—I dare say it must have bin someting else, hey, Massa Leetlejohn?"

"Pomp, I didn't think you was such an old blockhead."

"Well den, 'spose you go ax somebody wiser dan me," said the great Ducklegs in a huff, and the two friends parted in no very good-humour with each other, leaving the mystery to be explained by the course of time, and the events it carries in its mighty womb.

CHAPTER XIV.

A voyage, a story, and a land adventure.

The boat in which Rainsford took passage down the Kentucky River was bound on a voyage up the Ohio, and consequently at the junction of the two rivers he shifted himself and his "plunder," to the first which happened to come by on its way to New Orleans. This proved to be a broad-horn, of which, by a singular coincidence, our old acquaintance Samuel Hugg was captain and owner. Many long years had elapsed since he carried the fortunes of Colonel Dangerfield down the Ohio; but they had passed over him, as the elements pass over the rugged rock, making it only more rough and hard. He was still as straight and almost as tall as the sycamores that tower along the banks of the western rivers, and his rough vivacity remained undiminished, though he sometimes complained, or rather swore most originally, at the steamboats, which were now just beginning to make their first trials on the western waters, preparatory to the mighty change they have since worked in the destinies of that extensive region. The sagacious mind of Captain Sam foresaw in their success the ruin of his business, and the extinction of the broad-horns on the Ohio and Mississippi, and he often took occasion to call down upon them the judgment of snags, sawyers, sandbanks, and bursting of boilers. Nevertheless, he was sometimes

wrought upon to confess that the varmints were sweet creturs, and that it was "Transcendent to see them ploughing their way up the Mississippi, as if the d—l himself kicked 'em on end, anyhow. That Daniel Boone is a screamer," would he say; "she beats the old man himself, and he was no fool, I tell you. I used to know him when he was sixty year old, and then he could beat any man in Old Kentuck shooting at a mark. I remember I stood once a hundred yards off, and let him shoot a rifle ball at a tin pint mug right on the top of my head, and I wish I may be utterly onswoggled if he didn't tip it off as slick as bear's grease, anyhow. Ah! there's no such screamers nowadays."

The captain, as we before observed, was a mighty considerable talker, and in the twilight of the autumnal evening, as they glided silently down the stream, he delighted to tell of his adventures on the waters of the west, which he had navigated for more than forty years. Some of his stories were what are deemed tough, and it required a little extension of one's faith to believe them; but there was an extravagance about them which at times was not a little amusing, when coupled with a concatenation of phrases that may fairly be called inimitable. We ought not to omit recording that Cherub Spooney, now no longer a smart chance of a boy, but a full-grown man, was still attached to the service of Captain Hugg, and at the time we are speaking of officiated as second to the commander, to whom he considered himself equal in every respect. Besides Spooney, the crew consisted of two or three new hands, and the invariable appendage of all these boats, a gentleman of colour, officiating as cook, and who

Captain Sam swore was the knowingest chap he ever knew. "The varmint can't read," would he say, "but I wish I may be split into shingles, if he can't tell what's in a newspaper by only smelling it."

One evening, Rainsford, who found his melancholy charmed in spite of himself by the interesting novelty of his situation, and the strange language and manners of his companions, sat listening to the conversation of the crew as they were enjoying one of the most beautiful twilights nature ever bestowed upon the earth. There was a silence, a luxurious softness in the aspect and quiet repose of the crystal river, as it glided noiselessly along between low level banks from which sprung giant trees, that spread their broad limbs like vast umbrellas, that was exquisitely agreeable, and harmonized delightfully with the silence of the earth, which here bore scarce a trace of the labours of man. They were now approaching the junction of the two great rivers, which, rising in distant regions of the world, at length unite their waters in one mighty stream, and journey together to the ocean of oblivion.

The party was seated on the roof of the broadhorn, which consisted of boards inclining at each end from the centre, so as to let the rain run off, and singing or telling stories according to custom, aided by the indispensable accompaniment of a competent supply of whiskey. Rainsford had seated himself also upon the roof of the boat, to enjoy the scene before him, and was now casting a glance of admiration on either side; now busying himself in a labyrinth of reflections, which, whether he turned to the past, the present, or the future, were equally fraught with unqualified bit-

terness. Gradually, however, his attention was arrested by the following extraordinary tale.

"Well then, captain, if he won't sing, suppose you tell us another story," quoth Cherub Spooney.

"Ay, do now, captain; tell us the story of the strange cretur you picked up going down the river," said another.

"Ah! now do, Massa Cappin Sam," quoth blackey.

"Well, I'll tell you how it was. We had hauled in the broad-horn close ashore to wood; wind was up-stream, so we couldn't make much headway anyhow. Bill told the nigger to cook a few steaks off Clumsy—that was what we called the bear I shot the day before—well, while we were a-wooding—"

"That story's as long as the Mississippi," said one.

"Shut pan, and sing dumb, or I'll throw you into the drink," exclaimed Spooney.

"Why, I heard that story before."

"Well, supposing you did, I didn't; go on, captain."

"Well, as I was saying, Spoon, the nigger—"

"I tink he might call um gemman of choler," muttered blackey.

"The nigger went to cook some bear while we were wooding, so that we might have somethin to go upon. When we came back, what kind of a varmint do you think we started in the canebrake?"

"I reckon an alligator," said blackey.

"Hold your tongue, you beauty, or you shall smell brimstone through a nail hole," cried Spooney; "go ahead, go ahead, captain."

"Well, as I was saying we started the drollest

varmint perhaps you ever *did* see. Its face was covered with hair, like a bull buffalo, all but a little place for his eyes to see through. It looked mighty skeery, as though it thought itself a gone sucker, and calculated we were going to eat it, before we killed it; but we carried it aboard the broadhorn, and took compassion on the poor thing. I slapped it on the back, and told it to stand up on its hind legs, and I wish I may run on a sawyer if it didn't turn out to be a live dandy."

"Had it a tail?"

"I'll wool lightning out of you, Bill, if you interrupt me."

"That's actionable in New Orleans."

"Ha! ha! whoop! wake snakes—go ahead, go ahead, and don't be so rantankerous," shouted the audience.

"I swear, if he once gets my tail up, he'll find I'm from the forks of Roaring River, and a bit of a screamer," said Captain Hugg.

"Well, go ahead—go ahead—tell us about the dandy—ha, ha, ha! I should like to have seen it when it stood upon its hind legs. What did it say?"

"Why, I asked what they called such queer things where it came from, and it said Basil; and that the captain of the steamboat had put it ashore because it insisted on going into the ladies' cabin. Well, some of us called it summer-savory, some catnip, some sweet basil, and we had high fun with the cretur, and laughed till we were tired. And then we set him on a barrel forked eend downwards—"

"Yough! yough! yough!" ejaculated blackey, bursting into one of his indescribable laughs.

"No laughing in the ranks there—throw that

nigger overboard if he laughs before I come to the right place, and then you may all begin. Well, then, I began to ask him all about himself; and he told me he was a great traveller; and that he had been so far north, that the north star was south of him. And then he asked me if I knew any thing of navigation and the use of the globes. 'To be sure I do,' said I; 'aint they made for people to live on?' Then he inquired if I ever heard of Hershell, or Hisshell, I forget which, and I told him I knew him as well as a squirrel knows a hickory-nut from an acorn.' 'He's dead,' said the queer cretur.

"'No, no,' says I, 'that won't do, there's no mistake in Shavetail, you may swear. I saw a pedler with some splendid sausages made of red flannel and turnips go by our house and I changed with him some wooden bacon hams. He came from Litchfield, where Hershell lived, and didn't say a word about it.' Here he made a note in his book, and I begun to smoke him for one of these fellers that drive a sort of trade of making books about Old Kentuck, and the western country; so I thought I'd set him barking up the wrong tree a little. And I told him some stories that were enough to set the Mississippi afire; but he put them all down in his book. One of my men was listening, and he sung out, 'Well, Sam, you do take the rag off the bush, that's sartin;' and I was fearful dandy would find out I was smoking him; so I jumped up and told Tom a short horse was soon curried, and I'd knock him into a cocked-hat if he said another word. And that broke up the conversation.

"Next morning we stopped to wood a little below New-Madrid, and the dandy, who seemed one of the

curiousest creturs you ever saw, and was poking his nose everywhere, like a dog smelling out a trail, went with me a little way into a cane-brake, where we met a woman living under a board shed, with four or five children. Dandy asked her if she was all alone—she said her husband had gone up to Yellow Banks to look for better land. Then he wanted to know what she had to eat, and she said nothing but sweet pumpkins. 'What, no meat?' said he—'No, nothing but sweet pumpkins.' 'Well,' said dandy, 'I never saw any thing half so bad as this in the old countries.' And then he put his hand in his pocket, and gave her a *pickalion*. 'Thank you,' said she, 'as I am a living woman, I've tasted no meat for the last fortnight—nothing but venison and wild turkeys.' 'The d—l you hain't,' said dandy,and wanted to get the pickatlon back again."

"What a wild goose of a feller, not to know that nothing is called meat in these parts but salt pork and beef. He's a pretty hand to write books of travels," said Spooney.

"I wish I may be forced to pass the 'old sycamore root' up-stream twice a day, if I'd give the Mississippi Navigator for a whole raft of such creturs. But what did you do with him at last, captain ?"said another.

"Why, I got tired of making fun of the ring-tail-roarer, and happening to meet the steamboat Daniel Boone, Captain Lansdale, coming down stream, just as she had smashed a broad-horn, and the owner was sitting on the top of it, singing,

'Hail, Columbia, happy land,
If I ain't ruin'd I'll be ——.

I persuaded the captain to let dandy come aboard

again, on his promising to keep out of the ladies' cabin. So we shook hands, and I wish I might be smash'd too if I wouldn't sooner hunt such a raccoon than the fattest buck that ever broke bread in old Kentuck."

The next morning the broad-horn arrived at the junction of the two great rivers Ohio and Mississippi, which Rainsford had anticipated with no small degree of impatience. But he found there was nothing to the eye particularly striking. The imagination indeed might dwell on the endless course of the two streams here rolling along the collected waters of such vast regions. The union of these mighty rivers was consummated in the midst of a dead solitude. For many miles before it joined the Mississippi, the Ohio glided through a low swampy wilderness, quietly, and with a wave as limpid as the crystal spring, until turning a sharp angle it met the swift torrent of the great father of waters, the "wicked river," as the boatmen called it, and was whirled away by its irresistible impetuosity. It was the union of a gentle, unresisting maiden with a rough and angry giant. The boiling eddies, the turbid waters of the Mississippi, inevitably conjure up the idea of an eternal warfare with the earth; it tears its banks as it rushes along; and sometimes, as if impatient of its devious windings, forces itself a passage through a projecting point, making a new channel in one place, and leaving another dry. The chief ambition of a western adventurer is to found a great city on speculation; and it may be well supposed that the junction of these two great rivers did not escape the keen eye of these sagacious people, who may be said to live on futurity. Tradition said that a city had once been founded

here, consisting of some houses built on piles. But the first rising of the Ohio inundated the surrounding region, and discouraged the adventurers. Rainsford saw but a single house, standing alone in the vast solitude, and making if possible its loneliness more striking. Its windows were broken, its outside blackened by the weather, and such was its melancholy aspect that Captain Hugg said it always put him in mind of the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Launched on the bosom of the swift Mississippi the broad-horn proceeded with an accelerated course, and without stopping, until they arrived near the little town of New-Madrid, where it was necessary to halt for a supply of wood. It was a close sultry day, with scarcely a breath of air stirring, and the atmosphere of a hazy obscurity, which almost always lays a load of languor on the spirits. The birds were sheltered in the deep forests, where they remained panting in silence; and the few domestic animals to be seen, ventured as far into the rapid stream as they dared, and there stood lashing the insects with their tails, listlessly and languidly, as if the effort was almost beyond their strength. While the argonauts of the broad-horn were gathering drift-wood along the shore, Rainsford, accompanied by Captain Sam, strolled to the confines of the Great Prairie, as it is called, which extends for many miles from the borders of the Mississippi. As they stood admiring the rolling expanse of vapours which gave to its vast surface the appearance of the distant ocean in a calm, and coursing with their eyes the dead and noiseless solitude, a distant rumbling sound caught their attention for a moment—ceasing for a moment, and in a moment beginning again, apparently nearer than before. It was suc-

ceeded by a vast cloud of dust, which all at once obscured the air, and hid from their view the face of the world.

"Cut dirt, stranger, for your life; there's a whirlwind coming," cried Captain Sam, suiting the action to the word.

But he had scarcely spoken when the earth opened between them, and they stood rocking to and fro on either side a yawning chasm. The ground rose in waves, like the sea in a storm; the vast trees that skirted the bare precincts of the endless plain nodded and struck their high heads together with a crash, and lashed each other with their giant limbs; the earth burst its strong ribs, and rose, and split into vast ravines; the waters broke through their bounds, and while they formed new lakes, or forced themselves into new channels in some places, in others they left large spaces high and dry. Anon the waves of the firm-fixed earth subsided for a moment, and she lay trembling and quivering as in the paroxysm of an ague.

During this appalling interval, Rainsford and his companion rose from the ground, where they had been thrown by the resistless force of the vibrations, and instinctively sought refuge they knew not whither. The captain made towards the river, as being his natural element; while the other climbed one of the lofty trees that skirted the bounds of the interminable plain, from a vague apprehension of the waters, which, as well as the earth, seemed struggling to free themselves from the fetters of Nature's inflexible laws. He had scarcely done this, when again the same appalling noises approached from another quarter, and again the firm-set earth began to heave and curl itself

into a sea of waves that seemed to approach from a distance, gathering strength, and rising higher and higher, until they burst, scattering vast volumes of water and sand high in the air, and leaving the ground seamed with deep chasms, which the traveller still surveys with astonishment and dismay. In a few moments the earth seemed changed into a different element, and to become an ocean. A large portion of the district around was covered with the waters, and the tree on which Rainsford had sought refuge stood rocking to and fro in the midst of them. Darkness, or at least an obscurity, like that of a total eclipse of the sun, came over the world; and such was the dismay of all animated nature, that a little bird came and sought refuge in the bosom of the young man, where it lay quiet and tame in the trance of terror. He could feel its little heart beat against his own, and the communion of sympathy between him and the panting flutterer was not unsoothing in this terrible hour.

Casting his eye towards the town of New-Madrid, he beheld the houses tottering and tumbling to pieces, and the people fleeing to and fro in all the desperation of overwhelming terror. Turning to the Mississippi, he suddenly observed it in one particular spot boil up, and overflow its banks, carrying boats and every thing that floated on its surface far over into the fields, where they were left perfect wrecks. Nay, it spared neither the living nor the dead, for all at once he saw the little graveyard of the village, with its mouldering bones and quiet inhabitants, lifted, as it were, from its resting-place, and hurled into the torrent, where it and they were scattered, never to be associated again in time or in eternity. In this situation he

remained all that day and night, amid a succession of shocks that seemed to threaten the annihilation of the whole scheme of nature, and the production of a second chaos. Such was the exhaustion of his frame, that he could scarcely support himself; and had he not wedged his body in the crotch of the tree, he must have fallen and perished. In the morning the waters around him had gathered into a newly-formed lake at a distance of a few miles, and the shocks intermitted. The little bird that had lain all night panting in his bosom, apparently revived by the presence of the cheerful morning sun, struggled from its place of refuge, flew away, like the dove from the ark when the waters had subsided, and did not return. Stiff and exhausted, he descended from his perch, and with great labour and difficulty made his way to the town, where he found a few persons who had ventured to return to their homes, or rather the ruins of their homes. Fortunately, these dwelt not in palaces or stately houses, but in cottages of logs and clay, and few or no lives had been lost. Many were missing for a time, but they all returned again save one man, who had been left on an island in a lake formed by the convulsions of the earthquake, and whose bones were accidentally found long afterwards.

Among those who made their appearance during the day, to the great satisfaction of our hero, was the captain and crew of the broad-horn in which he had taken his passage. The story they told of their translation from the waters to the land was tinged with many wonders and extravagances, which, being repeated day after day, and year after year, gradually approached to the incredible. It was a time and a region of wonders,

however, and not the least of these was the extraordinary abstinence of Captain Sam and his people. They neither swore nor drank whiskey that day, nor during the continuance of the shocks of the earthquake, which lasted with occasional intervals so long, that the people of the neighbourhood got used to it, insomuch that a veritable traveller relates, that going ashore near New-Madrid, and visiting the house of an old lady, he was alarmed by certain disagreeable tremblings of the earth; whereupon she exclaimed, in an encouraging tone, "O, don't be frightened, stranger; it's only the earthquake." We are sorry to say that the reformation of these worthies lasted no longer than the earthquake, and that they returned in due time to their old habits. Tradition says that this remarkable phenomenon produced a radical reform in the phraseology of Captain Sam Hugg; for that whereas before he was accustomed to designate himself as "half horse, half alligator, and a little of the steamboat," he ever afterwards added "a small sprinkling of an earthquake" to the former ingredients.

Rainsford remained in the village of New-Madrid several days, in a state of mind little to be envied. The tremendous and appalling scenes he had encountered, operating on his gloomy, nervous, and apprehensive temperament, had increased his propensity to melancholy anticipations. Such dispositions are almost always inclined to fanaticism, and prone to wrest the great phenomena of nature from the mysterious universal agents of Providence, to the paltry and miserable instruments of abject superstition. With a vain and impotent presumption, they imagine the wrath of Heaven is roused for the attainment of petty

purposes of individual punishment, and exclaim, in the language of the insane interpreter of the Divine will,—

> I saw the bolt of heaven launch'd from on high,
> Mark'd its bright course, and lo! it kill'd a fly!

Under the influence of this delusion, he imagined that there was something ominous, something prophetic in the earthquake which had thus arrested his voyage down the river. He viewed it as a distinct indication that he was not permitted to proceed for the purposes he had in view, because these purposes were become unnecessary by the sure and certain fate that awaited him, and which he now fully persuaded himself was in a swift progress to its final consummation. "To what end," would the fiend whisper to him, 'to what end visit distant scenes? to what purpose enlarge thy mind, or cultivate thy understanding, or gratify thy curiosity, by contemplating the vast works of the creation? or to what purpose set thy house in order, since in a little while, yea, as sure as the voice of the Deity prophesies in the thunder, the whirlwind, and the earthquake, in a *little* while thou wilt neither be able to enjoy the noble feast of the mind, nor taste the blessings of a peaceful home?"

Guided by this dangerous monitor, Rainsford, after lingering about the village, where his nerves and his imagination were irritated and sublimated by the perpetual recurrence of the shocks of the earthquake, for some days, and enduring the harassing struggle of not being able to make up his mind whether he should proceed to New Orleans or not, at length determined to retrace his steps to the place whence he had departed, and he re-

turned unexpectedly to the village of Dangerfield-ville, after an absence of about a month.

Colonel Dangerfield received him with hospitable civility, for it was almost a part of his religion to treat every human being as if he had gained a sanctuary when once beneath the shelter of his roof. But Rainsford, whose nerves vibrated to the slightest touch of neglect as well as the slightest indication of a want of cordiality, saw, or fancied he saw, a diminution in the honest warmth with which the colonel had bade him farewell in the manner he received him now. On the part of Mrs. Dangerfield all was kindness and matronly welcome. The young lady met him with a lively nonchalance.

"You have made a quick voyage and a speedy return," said she; "well, have you brought me the present you promised?"

"I have not been to New Orleans," was the reply. "No farther than New Madrid."

"Well, and what did you see there, any parrots or monkeys?"

"No, I only saw an earthquake."

"An earthquake!" exclaimed they all, supposing he was jesting, as they had not yet heard of it in this remote region, where its effects were not felt.

"How did it look?" asked Virginia.

"It looked like the last agony of expiring nature—as if the Omnipotent had resigned his empire of the universe, and left the rebel elements to struggle for mastery. It looked—pray Heaven I may never look upon its like again."

"Come, come, young man," said the colonel, in rather a severe tone, "no jesting on such subjects. It is unworthy a rational being, as of the Being that created him."

"Jesting! as I live, sir, I saw the earth rolling in solid waves, and felt myself tossed on them as if I had been on the sea. I saw the trees rock, and knock their heads against each other till they dashed themselves to pieces. I saw the ground open, and spout out lakes and rivers. And I saw the churchyard, and the graves, and the mouldering bones, all lifted up and carried away out of sight. If such are the jestings of the great Ruler of the universe, what must his anger be?"

The hearers were overawed by the picture he drew, and the deep seriousness of his tones convinced them he was at least in earnest. Virginia, as she scanned his face, saw in it such a change since they parted, such an expression of haggard terror, and such a pale hue of ill health, that she felt the dews on her eyelashes, and a pang shot through her heart at having sported with the feelings of one whom she was sure was labouring under sickness of body or mind.

Further inquiries produced a more detailed and coherent account of the great phenomenon he had witnessed. But still there was an air of wildness approaching to rhapsody in his manner and language, which seemed to indicate that his nerves had not yet recovered the shock of such an appalling scene, nor his imagination settled down into a state of wholesome repose. The whole of the remainder of the day he was restless and unquiet; and any sudden jar or noise made him start as if apprehensive of approaching danger. Colonel Dangerfield, as he watched the singularities of his conduct, could not help recalling to mind the communications of that knowing politician, learned wight, and pestilent busybody, Zeno Paddock.

CHAPTER XV.

The Author doeth homage to his mother earth, after which he describes a hunting match.

WINTER, with his hoary beard and fiery proboscis, whence hung glittering icicles like jewels from barbarian nose, now stripped the forest of its green leaves, the gardens of their blushing honours, and cast them away like worthless weeds to wither and die, and return like man, and all created nature, to their common mother, earth. There are who complain of the different dispensations of Providence to man and the world he inhabits; that the former knows but one fleeting spring, while the other every revolving year renews its youthful beauty till the consummation of all things arrives. But beshrew such pestilent humgruffians! hath not the wise Dispenser of all good things made ample amends by giving us memory to recall our youthful pleasures; fancy to paint a thousand scenes fairer and more delicious than spring e'er offered to the eye of mortals? And last and best of all, hath he not given us Hope, whose glorious visions far exceed all that the May of life ever realized? The richest gifts showered on the earth; her diamonds, gold, and carpets of flowers; her power of renewing all her youthful charms at each revolving year, are nothing to those bestowed on man—his reason, and his immortality.

Yet let us not undervalue our good old mother earth, for good she is, ay, and beautiful too, whether clothed in the eastern magnificence of imperial green, or basking in the glowing gold of summer sunshine, or flaunting like Joseph in the many-coloured coat of autumn, or wrapped in her wintry winding-sheet, she awaits like the just man the hour when she shall arise more glorious for her long sleep. Who can contemplate her smiling valleys, rich meadows, golden harvests, grateful flowers, whispering woods, endless winding rivers, boundless pathless seas, full-bosomed hills, and cloud-capped mountains, without a feeling of awful recognition of Infinite Power? Who can behold the admirable union and aptness with which all these participate in one great end without doing homage to Infinite Wisdom? And who can revel in the balmy air, inhale the breath of the meadows and the flowers, listen to the music of her birds, her brooks, her whispering leaves, her answering echoes, and taste her other bounteous gifts of all that man can wish or enjoy, without bowing his head in grateful acknowledgement of Infinite Mercy?

Though long divorced from the country, we have not yet, thank Heaven! quite lost the rural feeling. We can still recall the scenes of early life with a pleasure unalloyed by pining regrets for the past or unmanly fears of the future; and we often steal a few days from the racket of the noisy town to bury ourselves in the holy quiet of the mountains; renew once more the simple pleasures of days long past, and be a boy again with our own little boys; to chase butterflies and grasshoppers; attack wasps' nests; tumble on the haycocks; gather chestnuts; ramble

whole mornings without object or end; and last, and dearest pleasure of all, follow some mountain brook through its romantic rugged solitudes; and pit our art against the cautious timidity of the speckled monarch of the leaping stream.

The winter brought with it a cessation of out-door employments, save that of hunting, to the rural inhabitants of the village of Dangerfield-ville, and gathered them, especially of evenings, around the glowing fire, where Master Littlejohn revelled in the luxury of three chairs to his heart's content. Sometimes they made parties to hunt the deer, or the scoundrel bear, whose rugged nature and rugged hide make him the scandal of the forest. On these occasions Bushfield was always summoned to take the command, and never conqueror led his army to the field with more eager appetite for glory than our gallant woodman. Rainsford, who by degrees seemed to have in some measure recovered his usual level of mind and spirits, often accompanied them, and always felt the resistless inspiration of the sport. Even Mr. Littlejohn occasionally gathered himself together, and sallying forth among the rest, rifle in hand, "talked big," as the Black Warrior phrased it, and did marvellously little. It was his invariable custom to place himself in some convenient spot, and there await the coming of the deer. If it came, he had his shot and generally missed; if it came not, he had a most excellent opportunity of boasting what he would have done had an opportunity offered. One day when the Black Warrior happened to be on the same station with him, Littlejohn missed a fine fat buck, which came leaping along within ten yards of him.

"Huh!" said the red man, "your rifle is be-

witched, you must go and get some great medicine to cure it."

"Medicine? What, would you have me give my gun a dose of physic?"

"I mean great medicine. Something to make him shoot straight. Something Great Spirit give to his good people to keep off bad one."

"Pooh—do you think the Great Spirit meddles with such nonsense as shooting a deer?"

"Yes, Great Spirit meddle with every thing. I go hunting, I shoot, shoot, shoot, no kill any thing, bad spirit won't let me, deer run away, birds fly away, no hit. Well, I go to conjurer, and he give me great medicine Great Spirit give him, and then when I fire, huh! down drop deer, bird, bear, every thing; bad spirit gone away. Well, I go fish—fish come, nibble, nibble, nibbie, no bite, no catch one at all, bad spirit come and say no. Well, I go to conjurer again, and he give me 'nother great medicine. Then I go fish once more, and then, huh! I catch many as I please. Bad spirit gone again."

"Now you don't believe this, do you?"

"Believe? Indian know so. You white men say, proof of the pudding in the eating. I shoot nothing, I catch no fish, I go get great medicine, den I shoot every thing, never miss. And I get fish, many as I can carry. Huh! is not all owing to the great medicine?"

"I don't believe one word of it."

"No! look here." And opening his tobacco-pouch he carefully brought out an eagle's feather. "There, there one great medicine. I leave him home I shoot nothing, I bring with me I never miss. Huh! You white men think you have all the great medicines. Indian got some too. But hark!"

And at that moment they heard the sonorous music of the deep-mouthed hounds, echoing far and wide, and approaching the pass they occupied, in full career. Nigher and nigher came their cry, and Littlejohn, who had neglected to reload his rifle, set about it immediately. But before the deed was done, the deer, with his antlers thrown back on his neck, and eyes almost starting out of his head with fear, came bounding past like the wind. But the charmed rifle of the Black Warrior arrested his course; the bullet entered his breast, he sprung his last spring, and fell dead.

"There—you see, great medicine do that."

"Great fiddlestick," quoth Littlejohn, who was not a little jealous of the success of the Indian.

A North American Indian, in his primitive state, never betrays the least emotion except when he is drunk. None study dignity and self-possession as he does; nor is there in the civilized world, or in the courts of eastern despots, a greater slave to etiquette. In battle, he strikes down his enemy with graceful deliberation. At the stake, he inflicts the keenest tortures with the same indifference he endures them. He never declaims except when inspired by whiskey. He never interrupts another, and he never boasts of his exploits. When he appeals to his tribe for any new dignity, he relates them with an air of indifference, and leaves the audience to say what shall be his reward. When the full-blooded Indian means mischief, he is silent; and when the half-breed weeps, beware of him.

The Black Warrior affected to take no notice of the contemptuous epithet of Littlejohn. The rest of the party now came up, and being satisfied with the sport, and laden with game, returned to the village in triumph.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rainsford is besieged by the Holy Alliance of Zeno and Judith—The former achieves a great discovery.

The state of depression under which Rainsford had laboured for some time previous to the period of his introduction to the reader, naturally made him exceedingly sensitive to the slightest appearance of neglect, and peculiarly sagacious in detecting its first dawnings. Since his return to the village, he fancied that there was a falling off in the cordiality with which he had heretofore uniformly been treated by Colonel Dangerfield. The rest of the family were, as usual, kind and attentive; but although the colonel never on any occasion committed an overt act that distinctly marked a change in his feelings towards his guest, for that was against the canons of Old Virginia and her buxom daughter Kentucky, still there was something wanting, some inexplicable, indescribable little demonstrations of welcome, which the sensitive, melancholy stranger felt, but could not analyze. He now seldom or never asked Rainsford to accompany him abroad, and the interest he had heretofore taken in his affairs seemed to have subsided into something like indifference.

"I will no longer trespass on his hospitality," said the young man, and sallied once more forth to visit Master Zeno Paddock, with whom he held a long confabulation, the result of which will ap-

pear anon in all human probability. That same evening he took the opportunity, on some allusion being made to something or other that indicated an understanding on the part of the family of Colonel Dangerfield that he was to spend the rest of the winter with them, to observe, with some little embarrassment, that he was about to remove to Mr. Paddock's, who lived nearly opposite, a distance of two or three hundred yards.

The ladies expressed surprise, and the elder made some little attempt at remonstrance against this desertion; the colonel, as if offering a sacrifice of inclination to old habits, compelled himself to make a few civil speeches; but they wanted the eloquence of cordiality, and the thing was soon settled that the removal should take place the next morning. Additional melancholy gathered in the face of Rainsford after this, and he retired earlier than usual to his room, but not to his repose. Virginia heard him pacing to and fro, and detected, or fancied she detected, the occasional murmurs of a sorrowful or discontented spirit. Again her curiosity was excited, her sympathy awakened, by the apparent mystery of his nightly wakefulness; and her mind grew more and more confirmed in making it the subject of frequent contemplation.

The next day Mr. Rainsford took possession of his homely lodgings; but the change proved little satisfactory, and instead of finding greater quiet, as well as more perfect freedom from observation and restraint, he was perpetually pestered with the attentions of Zeno Paddock, together with his excellent helpmate Mrs. Judith, whose curiosity vied with that of her husband. The classical academy of Zeno being situated a little distance

in front of his log castle, he caused his tripod of authority to be forthwith removed to the vicinity of a window, which commanded a full view of the chamber of Rainsford, and enabled him to superintend the motions of that mysterious personage. If he visited Colonel Dangerfield, which he still continued to do occasionally, Master Zeno, as the boys always called him, was on nettles till he had an opportunity of questioning him as to what was said, done, thought, and looked on the important occasion; or if he walked forth into the village, or down by the river-side, or into the neighbouring forest, ten to one Master Zeno left his dominion to the lord of misrule, and sallied out to watch his motions. Often when Rainsford fancied himself alone, he would find his tormentor close behind him, and not unfrequently he seemed to come out of the earth, or to drop from the clouds, so sudden was his appearance.

Mrs. Judith, who was so ugly that one might be almost tempted to suppose it was her identical self that had cut off the head of Holofernes, and placed it in triumph on her own shoulders, was not a whit more chary of her company at home. She would bring her work, and sit with him, and put as many cross questions as a superlative pettifogger does when he wants to confound a simple witness. Indeed, her curiosity passed all human understanding.

"I am sure you must be melancholy, Mr. Rainsford," said she, on one of these occasions.

"No."

"Then I'm sure you are sick. Do let me give you some horehound or catnip-tea. Now I'm sure you *must* be sick."

"No, I'm very well."

"Then I'm sure you must have something on your mind. O, now I have it, you must be in love; all young men are in love,"—and she smiled like a hippopotamus or a sea-lion—"an't you, now, Mr. Rainsford?"

"No, Mrs. Paddock, I'm not in love," said he, a little impatiently.

"Well, that's transcendent; not in love, and been a whole season living with Miss Phiginny Dangerfield! Well, I vow, that's mighty! Well then, I suppose—where was you *raised*, Mr. Rainsford?"

"She takes me for a blood-horse or a game-chicken, confound her!" thought he. "I was raised, madam, in the house of my father."

"No, sure! well, I declare now, I thought so. Where did he tarry, if I may be so bold?"

"In the land of the living once," said the young man, with a sigh.

"Ah! poor man! I thought so. When did he die, if I may be so curious?—Pshaw! I never did see such rotten thread as this!—but, as I was saying, when did the poor dear old gentleman die?" sighing and sniffling a little.

"Before I was born."

"Well, that's droll, I declare. I wish I had a pair of spectacles. I believe I'm losing my eyes."

"I wish you would lose your tongue," thought Rainsford.

"Did he leave a widow?"

"Yes, madam, he did."

"And children besides you?"

"Yes, yes, yes! I had once two brothers."

"No, sure! and what has gone with them all?"

"They are all dead!" exclaimed Rainsford, whose agitation now became excessive.

"Dead! now you don't say as much. I declare it's very droll. What did they all die of?"

"What I shall die of one day or other!" and the youth covered his face with his hands, while his bosom heaved with strong emotion.

"Ah! now don't take on so, now don't," said Mrs. Judith, coaxingly, for she was a good-natured woman, notwithstanding she carried the head of Holofernes on her shoulders; "don't take on so; it's dangerous to think too much of these things. I knew a Mrs. Fudgell once, that got out of her wits on account of an awakening, and killed her own little child, because, as she said afterwards, when she came to herself, a spell before she died, she thought an angel appeared to her, and told her she must do it. People often commit murder out of pure dumps, which turns their brains upside down. If you take on so, maybe you'll be tempted to commit murder, and—"

"Woman! woman!" cried Rainsford, "what are you talking of? Do you know—have you ever heard—but that is impossible! Some fiend has sent you here to torment me." His countenance was pale and haggard, his limbs quivering with the tension of agony, as he seized his hat, and darted out of the room towards the recesses of the forest.

"He—m—m! I reckon, I suspect that all is not right; I wouldn't have on my mind what that young man has for something!" and she went straight over to the classical academy to tell Zeno all about it.

But that worthy professor of birchen classics had got the start of her. He had seen Rainsford hurry out of the house and make for the wood; and, sliding from his three-legged stool, hast-

ened after him, impelled by an agony of curiosity, leaving his congregation of little boys and girls as it were without a shepherd, to their mischievous divertisements.

Rainsford buried himself in the obscurity of the forest, and wandered about till his agitation had somewhat subsided. He sat down upon the mouldering trunk of a majestic tree that had been overthrown by a whirlwind, and wiped the dew from his cold forehead.

"To what am I reserved at last?" said he; "I came hither into the wilderness in hope to escape the miserable degrading fate that hangs over me; to find some place where my name and all that concerns me was unknown; where the dreadful secret of my life might remain without disclosure till—till destiny itself revealed it! But it pursues me everywhere; the detestable babbling of this woman discloses it; the very air I breathe vibrates the chord of agony in my heart, and discloses it. Murder!—that I should ever become a murderer, as that prating woman hinted!" and he groaned in despair as he pronounced the word murderer.

Just at that moment he heard some one sneeze, and, rushing to the spot from whence it proceeded, encountered the veritable Master Zeno crouching behind a tree.

"What do you want here?" cried the young man, seizing him by the collar.

"I—I came to consult you about setting up my newspaper, sir. I was thinking—"

"You did! and I suppose you heard what I said just now?"

"Why, I confess, sir, I did hear the last part; for I assure you I just came up the moment I sneezed."

"Well, and what did you hear?"

"Why, sir, I, I thought—I'm not sure, but I thought I heard you talking something of escaping a degrading fate; of finding some place of refuge. I hope you're not tired of my house already. I'm sure my wife and I pay you all the attention in our power, and never leave you alone if we can help it. I really hope—"

"Pooh! what else did you hear?"

"Why, I might be mistaken—I dare say I was, but I thought I heard you say something about murder, or murderer, or some such matter. But understand me, sir; I don't mean to say I believe—that is to say—my dear sir, what do you think of my plan for setting up a newspaper?"

"Look you, Mr. Paddock, you have intruded upon my privacy, and overheard, or at least in part overheard, what I had rather die than have known or even suspected till—till it is too late to keep the secret. It will be known too soon for me, but, until then, I would wish you never to say any thing on the subject."

"O no, sir, by no means; I promise to keep it a perfect, a most profound secret, that you are a—that is to say—but what think you, sir, of my plan for setting up a newspaper?"

"Why," and Rainsford reflected a moment, "this I think, and this I promise you, that if you will solemnly swear—"

"What, on the Bible, sir?"

"No, solemnly pledge your welfare in this world and that which is to come, never to reveal, not even to your wife, not to any living soul or human ear, what you have this day seen and heard; I will furnish you with the means of establishing a newspaper at once."

"What! a weekly, or a daily?"

"Daily or hourly if you please."

"A daily!—a daily!" cried Zeno, rubbing his hands; "sir,—Mr. Rainsford,—I promise you solemnly not to open my lips sleeping or waking, alive or dead, on the subject of the mur—I mean on the subject—provided you enable me to set up a daily paper,—daily sir, daily, I think you said?"

"I did, and I'll keep my word; but if you break yours,—if I don't break every bone in your body, nay, drive the breath out of it for ever, say I'm a liar and a coward. Go home, and if I ever catch you dogging me again, I'll shoot you as sure as you're alive; look here," and he exhibited to the astonished eyes of Master Zeno Paddock a real genuine Joe Manton, that caused the man of letters to make himself scarce in the shortest possible time.

"Well! well! what did you see, what did you hear, what did you do?—now do tell me, Zeno, or I shall burst,—quick, quick, quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Judith, running out of breath to meet her lord; "now *do* tell me, I promise you I won't whisper a syllable to any living soul."

"You won't?" said Zeno, drily.

"No, not even to Mrs. Tupper."

"Well, that's right; and to make sure you'll keep your promise,—come here, Judy,—a word in your ear; I didn't hear, see, or do any thing,—now don't tell anybody, will you?"

Hereupon Mrs. Judith gave her lord and master a most irreverent box on the ear, which caused the bells to ring bob-majors therein. But he resolutely kept the secret, having the hope of the newspaper and the fear of Joe Manton before his

eyes, although sore were the struggles which rent his mind, and the temptations he resisted. So strong was the vocation of our classic to follow Rainsford in his wanderings, that he sometimes caught himself in the very act, and was obliged, as it were, to turn the outward man round by force, and set him going the other way. He considered it not, however, in the bond, to refrain from the inquisition within doors, and made himself amends for his abstinence by day, by peeping into his low chamber window ten times a night, and listening with all his ears. As for Mrs. Judith, she came to a resolution to drown herself, and was proceeding towards the river for that purpose, when her good angel whispered her that it was out of all nature for a person to keep a secret twenty-four hours, and that either Zeno had nothing to tell, or she would certainly know it in due time. Accordingly she returned home, and like a faithful helpmate set about cooking the good man's supper, which tradition says he ate with singular demonstration of satisfaction, mumbling between whiles, "A daily!—a daily! who'd have thought it; what a lucky rogue I am," until Mrs. Judith was seized with another acute fit of curiosity, which would have assuredly taken away her breath, had it not luckily set her tongue running like unto a mill-clapper.

When Master Zeno came to say his prayers, which he did every night, his conscience smote him sorely on the score of keeping such a horrible secret as that of which he had just possessed himself. But then his conscience weighed but a scruple or two, and the temptation to disregard its monitions weighed several pounds. There was the hope of reward and the fear of punishment

in this world, staked against the long reckoning of the future, and it is scarcely necessary to say which of the scales kicked the beam. Zeno behaved like a man of honour; he kept the secret, at the same time that he hinted to everybody in the village, not excepting his loving wife, that he knew enough of a certain person that should be nameless to hang him, as sure as his name was Zeno Paddock.

CHAPTER XVII.

Treating of what follows that which went before.

THE persecutions of Mrs. Judith frequently drove Rainsford to seek repose, or at least relief, either in rambling through the woods, now showing forth all the desolation of winter, or at the fireside of Colonel Dangerfield, where he was always received with welcome by the ladies, and perfect civility by the colonel. Though he generally took his gun with him, it was observed he never brought home any game, and the Black Warrior frequently in his dry way advised him to procure some great medicine to make his rifle shoot straight. Mrs. Judith nearly distracted herself with wondering what under the sun could tempt a man into the forest in the depth of winter, except the prospect of killing something; and Bushfield laughed at him most unmercifully when he came over on a visit to Dangerfieldville. In short, Mr. Rainsford had the rare felicity of setting everybody wondering, and becoming an object of speculation to the whole village.

But there was one, and the fairest one of all, who felt somewhat more than curiosity about this young man, and that was Virginia Dangerfield. She was a high-spirited, imaginative young maiden, bred up amid the solitudes of nature, or at least without friends or companions of her own age and degree of refinement, and Rainsford was the first youth she had seen since the days

of her childhood, whose mind and attainments, feelings and pursuits, in any way harmonized with hers. Besides, there was something in the strong vicissitudes of temper he occasionally exhibited, such striking contrasts between the melancholy tones of his voice, the pallid hue of his cheek, the dark and gloomy tenor of his sentiments at times, and the gay, nay, almost wild vivacity he frequently indulged, until it almost approached to an appearance of artificial excitement, that was continually calling forth her wonder, her admiration, or her pity. Such a combination, it is generally believed, soon blends into one warmer sentiment in the heart of a young female; but as yet Virginia only cherished a strong feeling of sympathy towards this young man, blended with a strange, inscrutable, and fearful perception, she scarcely knew how or whence imbibed, which prevented that entire confidence which is the best foundation of virtuous love. When he was depressed and sad, she felt her heart drawn towards him irresistibly; but when he broke forth, as he sometimes did, into wild yet eloquent rhapsodies, bordering on incoherence; when his eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed with a sort of wayward inspiration, she knew not why, but she could not sympathize with what seemed so unnatural.

His conduct to her also savoured of the inconsistencies which marked his general deportment. He frequently passed his mornings and evenings during the winter in her society, and in general his conversation was highly intellectual, as well as imaginative; but at times his mind would seem to fly off suddenly from the subject into a train apparently having no connexion with it,

and referable to no conceivable concatenation of ideas. For days in succession he would exhibit towards her a course of the most delicate unobtrusive attentions, which she was tempted to interpret as young maidens are wont; and then, perhaps, without warning, provocation, or apparent motive, absent himself voluntarily, or rather studiously avoid her. It is scarcely in human nature not to resent such wayward caprices, and Virginia repaid him, when, with as little seeming reason as he had for absenting himself, he returned again. Thus they went on, half-friends, half-lovers; at one time cool, at another cordial.

In the mean while, Mrs. Judith continued her system of espionage, and almost every day discovered something that nearly killed her with the pangs of curiosity. Master Zeno honourably kept his word to Rainsford, saving the exception we hinted at in the last chapter; and truth obliges us to disclose the fact, that he encouraged his wife to continue her investigations, by taking every occasion to laugh at her vague suspicions. She was "determined to convince him some day or other, that their lodger had something or other on his conscience that might better not be there." In pursuance of this praiseworthy resolution, she continued her attentions, and favoured Rainsford with her company so frequently of a morning, and indeed all day, that he was more than once on the point of leaving the village, and remaining until the spring invited him to take possession of his own house. But he knew not whither to go; he shrunk from the society of the world; the rivers were all frozen; travelling without roads through the forest was impracticable to all but an Indian or a backwoodsman; and besides all this,

Virginia Dangerfield was such a charming girl, so gentle in her manner towards him, with such wild yet tender eyes, and such a voice! "Her words fall from her lips as soft and as sweet as the honey trickles from the new honeycomb," said he; and so saying, he bit his thumb at Mrs. Judith Paddock, and bade defiance to the head of Holofernes.

One night, when all the village slept, Rainsford was pacing his chamber as was his custom. He managed to keep the foul fiend that haunted his imagination, at bay while the sun shone, and the passing show of the world was exhibiting before his eyes; but when night and silence came, and when all that charmed him away from himself was absent from his sight, the grinning spectre rose and besieged his pillow the moment he laid down his head. Then it was that the short intervals of unreal enjoyment, or rather of illusive rest, were paid for by hours of sleepless, restless, miserable anticipations. To escape these, he would weary himself by walking back and forth for hours and hours, until, weary and debilitated, he sought a troubled repose, in a sleep to which the habitual contemplation of his waking hours, gave a character of reflected horrors. Occasionally he stopped to look out at his window on the dead landscape, commanded by the rising ground on which the village was situated. Not a breath of air was stirring, not a sound was abroad; no whispering leaves, no chirping insects; nor katydid, nor tree-frog, nor any thing that breathed of life, seemed to exist at that moment save himself alone. The earth was wrapped in her white winding-sheet of snow, and reposing in the trance of temporary death. The dark forest which

bounded the view at a distance seemed to his harassed fancy the utmost verge of the world, the commencement of the region of oblivion, beyond which all is chaos, uncertainty, and of which nothing is assuredly known, until all knowledge is vain.

As he stood buried under a mass of thronging incongruities, all at once it seemed that the sun had risen at midnight, and cast his bright morning ray upon the dark woods. A ruddy glare illuminated, not only the trees, but the sky above them, gradually extending higher and higher, and wider and wider, and brightening in its expansion, until the stars waxed dim and the moon-beams disappeared. The state of his mind inclined Rainsford to superstitious influences, and, as he watched these appearances in strange and awful perplexity, it occurred to him to look at his watch. It was scarcely one o'clock. It was not the first blush of the morning; and what could it be but some apt and supernatural warning; some one of those mysterious messages of mighty changes or individual ills, which, like the long shadows of the trees when the sun declines to the western horizon, stretch far beyond reality, and distance the course of time? A single word awoke him from his dream.

The dismal cry of "Fire!" from a single hoarse voice at once conveyed to his mind the natural solution of the threatening omen. In an instant he was in the grass-grown street which divided the village, and at the same moment saw the flames breaking out from the roof of Colonel Dangerfield's mansion, which, being built of pine-wood, burnt almost with the rapidity of tinder. Not a soul was stirring as yet but himself and the

person who had given the alarm, and from the total silence within, it was evident that none of the family were as yet awakened. Rainsford's first impulse was to knock violently at the door and call aloud. But it would seem that we miserable short-sighted mortals never sleep so sound as when the thief is abroad or the house on fire. No one answered, no one appeared, and the flames were gaining strength at every instant. A thought struck him, and running round to the side of the house where Virginia slept, he threw a large stone at her window, which broke two or three panes of glass, and scattered them about the room. The noise awoke her; she ran to the window, and demanded what was the matter.

"For the sake of your life," cried Rainsford, "ask no questions; the house is on fire, and every soul in it seems dead or asleep. Quick, quick, Virginia, or you are lost—I beseech you lose not a moment."

Virginia disappeared, and Rainsford hastened to receive her at the front door, which he found had been at length opened by Littlejohn, who stood, as villagers are wont to stand on occasions that so seldom occur, without knowing what to do, or which way to turn himself. The rest of the family gathered around him, with the exception of Colonel Dangerfield, who had gone the evening before to attend to some magisterial business at the county-town, some twenty miles off, and of Virginia, who had not yet made her appearance.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Rainsford, "you are all safe." Here he looked round, and found Virginia was not there.

"Where is Miss Dangerfield?" cried he, and

rushed into the house. The chamber of Virginia was at the extremity of the hall of the second story, which ran the whole length of the house; and Rainsford discovered, to his horror, that the staircase which led to it was in flames. At the head of the stairs he thought he could distinguish a white figure stretched at full length, and apparently insensible. He sprang three steps upwards, but the flames dashed in his face, and sent him back again. Again he made a desperate effort, but suffocation drove him once more to the foot of the stairs. By this time Mrs. Dangerfield and the rest of the family, with a crowd of villagers, were drawn to the spot, and saw the white victim of the flames lying as before described. The mother was held by force from rushing to her relief, and at length, overcome by her feelings, fainted, and was carried away insensible. At this moment Virginia recovered sufficient animation to rise, and sufficient recollection to be aware of her situation. A third time Rainsford attempted the ascent, and returned with his hair in a blaze.

"Fly to your chamber-window—fly—fly!" cried he, almost suffocated with heat, smoke, and agitation.

"I cannot fly!" exclaimed Virginia, faintly, and sunk down, to all appearance never to rise again, save when all the human race arise. The flames now approached the fair and gentle victim, whose hours seemed fast drawing to instants of time, and silent dismay and total inaction succeeded the noise and bustle of the preceding scene.

At the last decisive moment a sudden thought seemed to revive Rainsford from the leaden stupor which his excessive yet abortive exertions had

cast upon his mind and body. Pails of water had been brought in by the villagers in the vain hope of arresting the progress of the flames, and various articles of household furniture were thrown about the lower entry. Among these was a large damask table-cloth, a relic of the ancient glory of the Dangerfield dynasty, which Rainsford seized, dipped in the water, threw it over his head, darted up the staircase, which yet hung together, and, seizing the lifeless body of Virginia, found his way blindfold down again, with little injury to himself or the young lady, whom he tenderly sheltered under the wet damask, which was almost scorched to a cinder ere he had performed the perilous feat. But a few moments were consumed in the transactions we have just related; and scarcely had the safety of Virginia been achieved, when the roof fell in, and the crowd was obliged to leave the mansion to its fate.

Virginia was carried by Rainsford, in a state of utter insensibility, to a neighbouring house, whither her mother had been taken, and where she now remained in perfect distraction of mind. The sight of her daughter, however, soon brought her to herself; but it remained doubtful whether Virginia would ever revive. The long time she had remained in her swoon, and the heat and smoke in which she was enveloped, had apparently for ever quenched the vital spark; and for many an anxious moment all exertions to awaken it only strengthened a conviction that all was vain. Twice did they abandon the attempt, all except the mother, whose insurmountable affection seemed to produce a prophetic reliance on the eventual triumph of human means, aided by the

blessing of Omnipotence. She still persisted, and her perseverance was at length rewarded. Slowly, and as if, like Lazarus, she was awaking from the tomb, and casting off the chains of Death himself. Virginia revived to consciousness, and the spell of suspended animation was finally broken. By degrees she came to her recollection, and, casting her eyes towards the smoking ruins, threw herself into the arms of her mother, exclaiming, "My father can build a new house; but if I had lost thee, my mother, where should I find another like thee?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A great discovery of Mrs. Judith Paddock; to wit, that this is a most scandalous and wicked world.

THERE are certain conceited moralists, or philosophers, if so please ye, and certain affected sentimentalists, who profess to consider life and all its blessings, a boon not worth receiving, not worth possessing, and not worth our thanks to the great Giver. In the pride of fancied superiority, they pretend to look with calm contempt on the struggles, the pursuits, the enjoyments of their fellow-creatures, and to hold themselves aloof from such a petty warfare for petty objects. They undervalue the enjoyments, they exaggerate the sufferings of the human race, and indirectly impeach the mercy of Providence, in having created countless millions of human beings only to increase the sum of misery in this world.

But, for our part, we hold no communion with such men, whether they are sincere or not; nor do we believe for one single moment—except, peradventure, when suffering a twinge of the tooth-ache—that the good-hearted, well-disposed inhabitants of this world, take them by and large, do not on the whole enjoy more than they suffer even here, where it would seem from these philosophers and sentimentalists there is as little distribution of infinite justice as there is dispensation of infinite mercy. What though there are intervals of sorrow, disap-

pointment, remorse, agony, if you will, mingled in the cup of existence, that man must be very wretched indeed who, in looking back upon his course, cannot count far more hours of enjoyment than of suffering. We deceive ourselves perpetually, and there is nothing which we exaggerate more than the ordinary calamities of others, until the truth is brought home to ourselves by being placed in the same situation.

When mankind appear to be plunged in the very waters of bitterness, without hope or consolation, they are not, after all, so wretched as might be imagined by the young and inexperienced. Melancholy, grief, nay, even despair can find a strange pleasure in unlimited self-indulgence. The good Being who gives the wound seems to have provided a remedy to soften its pangs, by ordaining that the very grief which dwelleth in the innermost heart should be mixed with some rare ingredients that sweeten or alleviate the bitter draught. In his extremest justice, he seems to remember mercy; and while he strikes, he spares. Amid clouds and darkness there is still an unextinguished light; in storms and tempests there floats a saving plank; amid the deepest wo there is a sad luxury in giving way without restraint to tears; in calling to mind again and again the lost object of our affections, summing up the extent of our irretrievable loss, and pouring into our own wounds the balm of our own pity.

Happiness consists in a quiet series of almost imperceptible enjoyments that make little impression on the memory. Every free breath we draw is an enjoyment; every thing beautiful in nature or art is a source of enjoyment; memory, hope, fancy, every faculty of the intellect of man is a

source of enjoyment; the flowers, the fruits, the birds, the woods, the waters, the course, the vicissitudes, and the vast phenomena of nature, created, regulated, and preserved by the mighty hand of an omnipotent Being, all are legitimate and reasonable sources of enjoyment, within the reach of every rational being. Death is indeed the lot of all, and all should yield a calm obedience to the law of nature when the hour shall come. But a fretful impatience or an affected contempt of life, is as little allied to philosophy as to religion.

Such being our view of the subject, we are rather inclined to admire than to blame Virginia for being grateful to Rainsford for the preservation of a life as yet unstained by guilt or unblighted by suffering. The gift, and the manner of bestowing it, touched her to the soul, and, co-operating with former predispositions in his favour, produced a feeling so exquisitely tender, that if it was not love, it certainly was not friendship. Perhaps it partook of both, and in all probability it had more of the former than of the latter. As it was, however, it communicated a touching character to her speech, her actions, and—shall we confess it?—to her looks, when she sometimes watched with a newly-awakened interest those sudden changes of temper, those wild sallies of imagination, which she fancied waxed more and more frequent. The inconsistencies of his conduct also became every day more marked, and if he at one time was little less than a lover, he would at another become little less than rude and neglectful. Yet with all this, there was more, far more of the appearance of being irresistibly impelled by necessity than of acting under the influence of wanton caprice. It was evident that

grief, or some feeling allied to it, was at the root of all his eccentricities.

The morning after the fire a messenger was sent for Colonel Dangerfield, who returned in the evening. In the warmth of his gratitude for the preservation of his daughter, he thanked Rainsford with all his heart, and for a while every vestige of his former coolness disappeared. But though his conduct continued such as would have satisfied a stranger that the young man was a prime favourite, still Rainsford *felt* that the colonel was rather striving to repay an obligation than giving way to a spontaneous feeling of kindness. "He has heard or he suspects the secret reason of my flying from my home," whispered the apprehensive conscience of the unfortunate wanderer; and his first impulse was to rid him of his presence for ever, by departing as he came. But still he remained spellbound by an influence which every day became stronger, and every hour added something to the burthen he bore.

A few days sufficed for the erection of a new mansion in the room of that which had been burnt. The good villagers resorted to what, in woodland phrase, is called "log-rolling," which means a combined effort of many to do that which is either difficult or impossible to one. They gathered together and built the colonel a house, but it was a sad falling off from the other; being simply constructed of logs, after the manner of a primitive settlement; where, there being no saw-mills, the only resource is to take the whole tree, or "go the whole hog," as they say in "Old Kentuck." Nor could they boast much of their furniture, great part of that in the old house having been destroyed. But the spring was approaching,

the colonel had ample funds to build and furnish a house equal to the one he had lost, and they were content to wait. Indeed, we have observed, that not only do people who have the means of any gratification in their power exhibit less eagerness for its enjoyment; but it is equally true, that those who have once possessed the luxuries of wealth, generally submit to their loss with a much better grace than people who have never known any other state, endure the pressure of poverty. The reason is, that the former have had experience of how little real value are mere superfluities in the cup of happiness, while the latter view them through the exaggerated medium of their imagination.

The family was settled in the new log-palace, and matters going on in the usual jog-trot way, when one morning Mrs. Judith Paddock, having been on the watch for some time, saw the coast clear, and sallied forth across the way to pay a visit to Miss Virginia Dangerfield, whom she found, as she wished, alone. That young lady did not much covet the society of Mrs. Judith, but it was a rule of the house never to refuse either hospitality or politeness to any but the worthless. The good woman was accordingly received with due kindness, and invited to sit down. For some time she talked of matters and things in general; then she came to particulars; condoled with Virginia on the burning of the house; congratulated her on her escape, and finally uttering a deep sigh, stopped her everlasting tongue for a moment.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Paddock?" said Virginia.

"Ah!—heigho!—this is a wicked world."

"It has indeed rather an indifferent reputation, but what induced you to make the remark just now?"

"Ah!—heigho!" And here she smoothed her white apron. "It's a scandalous world, a very scandalous world. I could tell such things—but I'd rather cut out my tongue than scandalize any human being, not even so much as a nigger."

Virginia knew the good Mrs. Judith had something on her mind, but determined not to be accessary to bringing it forth. Perhaps she knew enough of her to know that she would hear it without. Mrs. Judith sighed, and smacked her lips again.

"Ah! who'd have thought it, who'd have thought it—such a nice young man!"

"Who, Mrs. Paddock, your husband?" said Virginia, smiling.

"No, indeed, Miss Phiginny. Ah! he's another guess sort of a man. But what a shocking pity it is. Heigho! it's a scandalous, a wicked world this."

"Have you just found that out, Mrs. Paddock?"

"No, indeed, I'm not quite such a fool, Miss Phiginny; but I've found out something else."

"Ah!" Virginia was just going to ask what, but checked herself, determined to be innocent of every thing except listening. Again Mrs. Judith sighed, and shook her ambrosial curls.

"Ah! what a nice young man that Mr. Rainsford seems to be. I talk to him sometimes for hours, and he don't interrupt me a single word. O! he's a nice young man. But—heigho!—what a wicked world we live in."

Virginia began to fidget a little, and it was just

on the tip of her tongue to inquire what Mrs. Judith meant. But she only blushed.

"To be sure, he saved your life, they say. But, heigho!—mercy knows, if all I heard is true, it was the least thing he could do to make up for the life he took."

"What! woman—Mrs. Paddock—what do you say? What are you going to say?"

"Ah! its such a scandalous world—heigho!—such a wicked world, that I'd rather not tell what I know, if it wasn't that I think it my bounden duty to you and the colonel."

Virginia now trembled in spite of herself, and demanded at once all the woman knew. Mrs. Paddock drew her chair closer to her side, and began in an under tone, ever and anon looking around cautiously.

"You must know, Miss Phiginny, that though I like to find out what is going on here in the village, its only that I may keep it a secret from everybody. Especially, you know it's my business to know all about people that live in our house, else they might be horse-thieves or *murderers*;"—and she emphasised the word;—"and I be never the better for it. So I think it my duty to keep an eye upon them, and if I see or hear any thing suspicious, why, I follow it up, until, I warrant you, I ferret it out, somehow or other. Well," and here she drew her chair closer to Virginia, who turned pale at this awful preface. "Well. I somehow, I hardly can tell how, for I assure you I never listened at his keyhole, or—or—peeped in at his window, I often saw Mr. Rainsford, if his name is indeed Rainsford, in great distress; and heard him groan late at night, and walk across the floor. Well, putting odds

and ends together, says I to myself, says I, 'I, that young man hasn't got something on his mind that hadn't ought to be there, my name isn't Judith Squires,' that's my maiden-name, Miss. 'And,' says I, 'it's my duty to find it out, that I may keep it a secret from everybody like, you know.'"

"Well, well, go on, Mrs. Paddock. Let me know the worst."

"Ah! bad enough in all conscience, Miss Phiginny. Well, you see, I kindly, you know, turned the conversation upon different sorts of wickedness,—ah! this is a wicked world!—just to see if I could find out something from his looks, or words, or actions, you know. Well, I talked about stealing horses; and how the regulators served a horse-thief once; they tied him to a tree and whipped him. But I couldn't see any thing that looked like a guilty conscience; and so another time I told him of a man that robbed a traveller who was coming to buy land, and had his pocket-book full of money, but he looked as innocent-like as a child. And so I went on, talking of all sorts of bad things, without stirring his conscience at all, as I could see. When, one day—ah! this is a wicked world!—one day, it was yesterday three weeks, I believe. Yes, it *was* yesterday three weeks. I happened to be telling him about Mrs. Fudgell, poor soul, who, you know, went mad with religion, the year before last, and killed her child, you know. Well, if he didn't jump up as if he had been shot, and he cried out, 'What, murder her own child! Oh God! Oh God! that ever I was born for such misery!' and he snatched his hat and ran out of the room as if the sheriff had been after him. Now, putting all these things together,—Heigho!

If this was not such a scandalous world, I should say that Mr. Rainsford had—"

"What?" shrieked Virginia.

"The weight of blood on his conscience. I saw a man hanged once for murder that looked as much like him as two peas."

The idea was too horrible, and yet there certainly was something in his conduct, altogether strange, mysterious, and inexplicable. But Virginia thrust the grinning fiend suspicion from her with a mighty effort, and looking, with a pale countenance of severity at Mrs. Judith, warned her solemnly against indulging or uttering such ridiculous slanders. She summoned all her powers of reasoning to convince her of the utter improbability of such a man being stained with such a crime; she held up to her view the cruelty of imputing such deep guilt to a stranger, whose conduct since his residence among them had been kind, benevolent, and praiseworthy, in every respect; and she drew from Mrs. Judith a promise that she would never tell to any other human being what she had just disclosed to her. "As for me," cried Virginia, "I would as soon suspect my father."

"Yes, and so would I. But ah! heigho!—it's a very wicked and scandalous world this."

Mrs. Judith took her leave, and Virginia remained buried in the gloom of a painful melancholy revery long after her departure.

CHAPTER XIX.

Showing how little reason one generation hath to laugh at another.

THE evening of the day on which the foregoing interview took place Rainsford spent at the house of Colonel Dangerfield. He was more than usually elevated in the early part of the visit, and surprised as well as charmed them all, with the knowledge and intelligence he displayed. He sketched the manners and fashions of the day with spirit, mingled with no little spice of satire, and exhibited a perfect knowledge of the subject. It was evident that he had mixed with the great world, and Colonel Dangerfield was pleased at an opportunity of recalling his own recollections of the early part of his life.

"And is it possible," said Virginia, "that the young children dress like old people, and the old people like young children?"

"It is true, I assure you. I have often walked behind a lady in the street, whom I took for one in the bloom of youth, she was so bedizened with flounces and flowers, and quickened my pace to get a sight of her face; when lo, and behold, it turned out to be that of a grandmother."

"Well, I suppose the elderly gentlemen are more discreet?"

"Why, I can't say much in their favour. For aught I saw, they were as much inclined to outrage nature and propriety as the venerable old

ladies. The dandies of threescore were as plenty as the belles of a certain age, and emulated that deportment which, though it constitutes the charm of youth, is the reproach of old age."

"And the poor little children?"

"Ay, the poor little children, you may well call them. If you could only see the figures their mistaken parents make of them, you'd scarcely know whether they were premature old ladies, or premature young ones. They are absolutely crippled with finery, so that all the grace and vivacity of youth is smothered under a load of many-coloured trumpery, and they waddle along like so many little caricatures of the pigmy race. I declare to you that nothing is more common than to see a little girl of three years old going to school with her hair in papers."

"O, now I am sure you are jesting?"

"No, indeed, Miss Dangerfield, it is quite impossible for me to do justice to the masquerade figures you see in the fashionable promenade of a fashionable city, at the fashionable hour when the fashionable people are abroad. They seem dressed, not for walking, but for an assembly; they appear to forget that good taste is nothing else than good sense applied to a particular object; and that every thing which impedes the freedom of the person must be essentially unbecoming and ungraceful."

"From what you say, dress must be the reigning foible of the age."

"It is indeed, and, what is still worse, it is no longer possible to distinguish people by their dress, for all dress alike, from the mistress to the maid from the parlour to the kitchen."

"How ridiculous and absurd!" exclaimed Virginia.

"Why so ridiculous and absurd?" asked the colonel, who had been attending to the conversation without joining in it.

"Why, my dear father, is it not palpably ridiculous and absurd for people to dress all alike when their situations are all different?"

"Not if they have the means of doing so without sacrificing what is of more consequence than outward appearance. If the mistress dress like an opera-dancer, it would be hard to prevent the maid from making a fool of herself too."

"But, sir," said Rainsford, "ought not every person to dress according to their means and occupations?"

"O, certainly, always according to their means, and agreeably to their occupations when they are engaged in them. But on Sundays and holydays, when all are gentlemen and ladies, if the industrious tradesman, or the industrious man or maid-servant, purchase a suit of broadcloth or a silken gown, faith I don't see that anybody has a right to complain, provided they have the means and the honesty to pay for it."

"But, sir, to dress in all the preposterous extravagance of the fashion!"

"Well, the fault is in the preposterous extravagance of the fashion, and in those who set the example, not those who follow it. The young imitate the elder and wiser, the child copies the parent, and the lower classes always look up to the higher. All these last have to do is to set them a good example, instead of complaining that they follow a bad one."

"But don't you think the universal propensity

of all classes of people, high and low, in this country, to indulgence of every kind, a great evil?"

"Perhaps I do; but we must bear in mind that superfluity is the parent of extravagance. When civilized people are restricted in their means to the narrow circle of the actual wants of nature, they will necessarily be economical; but when, by the exercise of any ordinary trade or occupation, they can earn more than this, the surplus constitutes either a fund for saving or a fund for spending. In this country every man can, if he pleases, earn more than is requisite for the purposes of mere necessity. It is the boast and the blessing of us all that this is the case. But all sublunary blessings have their drawbacks; we must take the evil with the good, and compound for a disposition to luxury and extravagance in the lower orders, on the score of the universal diffusion of competency among all classes."

"I never saw such caricatures," exclaimed Virginia, looking at some milliners' costumes which Rainsford happened to have brought with him as curiosities; "look here, sir—only do look here, mother!"

Mrs. Dangerfield laughed, as well she might; and Virginia continued to declare that never was any thing so absurd as the dresses of the little children.

"Come here, Virginia," said her father, taking her hand, and leading her opposite to where hung a picture, which had been rescued from the flames of the old mansion by the piety of the great Pompey Ducklegs, and which exhibited the precise effigies and suits of a little boy and girl in the age of bag wigs, mighty cuffs, high-quartered shoes, hoop petticoats, whalebone stays, and lofty head-

gear; "look there, Virginia; and I beg of you to refrain from committing the indecorum of laughing at your grandfather, when I tell you that at the age of twelve years he wore that identical wig, that veritable buckram coat with sheet-iron skirts, that mortal pair of cuffs, those indescribable indispensables, and that most formidable sword of most formidable length. The little girl—but don't laugh at her, Virginia; she was thy great-aunt, and thou art her namesake. She died the year you were born—but the subject is a melancholy one. What think you of a young gentleman and lady of fourscore years ago, compared with their successors of the present day?"

"Why, really, sir, it seems to me that if the present day has gained nothing, it has lost nothing in the way of dressing little children."

"You say true, my dear; those who talk about one age being essentially wiser and better than another talk little less than sheer nonsense. Human nature, while it approaches perfectibility on one hand, recedes from it on the other; where it gains on the right, it loses on the left, like our great river Mississippi, which tears away its banks only to form a new deposite at its mouth: thus creating a new world in the ocean from the spoils of the old. Every succeeding age is only a new edition of the past."

"With *improvements*?" said Rainsford.

"With *alterations* in the binding rather than the contents, I doubt. And now, my dear, as the vicar of Wakefield said, 'Go help your mother make the goose-pie.'" The young damsel accordingly left the room to pursue her domestic avocations.

"Whoop!" exclaimed a voice without, which they all recognised as that of Bushfield.

"Come in, come in," cried the colonel.

"Come in! why, ain't I in?" exclaimed he, as he entered in a great flurry, and seated himself. "What a race I've had. I'll be goy blamed if I haven't bin trying to catch this squirrel—a fair chase, and no favours asked. There we were at rip *and* tuck, up one tree and down another. He led me a dance all the way from kingdom come till I got just by the village here; and what do you think? I had to shoot the trifling cretur after all. He got up on the top of the highest tree *pre*haps you ever *did* see; so I let him have it, just for being so obstinate."

"An excellent shot," said the colonel; "you've hit him in the eye, I see."

"O no, it isn't, but I was mad; no, no, it's a disgraceful shot—what I call a full huckleberry below a persimmon; for when I want the skin of one of these fellers, I always shoot a *leetle* before his nose, and then the wind of the ball takes the varmint's breath clean away, and I don't hurt the fur."

"You must have had some practice," said Rainsford.

"I'll be goy blamed if you wouldn't think so, if you only knew me as well as I know my old rifle."

"I should like to go out with you one of these times, if there is good sport in your part of the world."

"I don't know what *you* call good sport," cried Bushfield, who had now got on his hobby, "but I 'partly conceit if you had been with me one day last fall you'd have thought so. I saw a deer

and its fawn across a creek the other side of the mountain, and I wasn't altogether slow in letting fly, I tell you. The ball ranged them both. I had to wade through the creek, *and* I found the ball had entered in a hollow tree, after going right clean through the two deer, where there was a hive of honey, *and* the honey was running away like all natur; so I stooped down to pick up something to stop it, when I put my hand on a rabbit hid under a great toadstool. But somehow or other, coming across the creek, my trousers had got so full of fish, that one of the buttons burst clean off, *and* I will agree to be eternally derned if it didn't hit a wild turkey right in the left eye. Whoop! *ain't* I a horse?"

"A whole team, I should think," said Rainsford, highly amused with the eccentric rhodomontade of the woodman. Virginia happening at this moment to enter, he addressed her with a good-humoured kind of audacity,—

"You neat little varmint, have you got any thing for supper? for may I be lost in a canebrake, as I once was when I first came to these parts, if I ain't transcendently hungry. I could eat like all wrath."

Supper was brought in, and Bushfield made "a most transcendent supper." The company continued sitting round the table enjoying this little social meal, which was once the evening tattoo that brought all the family together, but which is now elbowed out of the circle of domestic economy into drawing-rooms and saloons, and might rather be called the morning breakfast than the evening supper. Virginia, who had a mischievous little female relish for humour, and who could enter into that of Bushfield, which, indeed, though

odd and extravagant, had nothing in it partaking of vulgarity, took occasion to question him as to the particulars of the story of his being lost in the cane-brake to which he had alluded.

"Well, I know you want to have a laugh at me; but howsomever, I don't so much mind being laughed at by a woman, and so I'll tell you the story for all that; and you may laugh anyhow, as you're not a man. I was out after a bear that had been about my hut several nights, and he led me such a dance! I wasn't such a keen hand at finding my way then, and at last I got into a cane-brake along the river, where the canes stood so thick, I wish I may be shot if you could put the leetle eend of a small needle between them without spectacles. Well, I was ripping and tearing away to get out, but only got deeper and deeper in the plaguy place; when all at once I heard the queerest noise I ever came across in all my days, though I've heard a pretty considerable variety, and I then thought I knew all the notes of the varmints, from the growl of a bear to the screech of a panther. But I could make nothing of this, and began to keep a sharp look out, which was hardly worth while, for I couldn't see to the end of my eyelashes, the canes were so transcendent close together. Well, I cut *and* slashed about, and every now and then heard the queer noise; at last it was so close to me, that I pricked my ears and cocked my gun, to be ready to take keer of myself in case of risk. Well, as I kept on ripping and tearing about, at last I came smack on the drollest-looking thing, prehaps, you ever laid your eyes on. It sat all in a heap, like the feller that found sixpence apenny in a place, with its head down below its shoulders, and its hair all

hanging about like the beard of a buffalo bull. 'Whoop!' said I; and the varmint raised its head, when I wish I may be shot if it didn't turn out a real he Ingen.

"'Hullo!' said I, 'what trade are you carrying on here, friend?' but I must say I had a mind to shoot the feller, though I hadn't then the same cause I have now to hate the varmints. However, I thought I'd first see whether he'd make battle or no; so I waited to hear what he had to say. But when I spoke to him, all he did was to grin and growl just like a lame bear. 'I say now, stranger,' says I, 'what may you be about here?'—'R—r—r—r!' said he, and grinned like a monkey. 'Well then,' said I, 'if you don't choose to tell what you're about, maybe, prehaps, you will tell where you happened to come from?' 'R—r—r—r!' said the varmint again. 'Well then, prehaps you'll tell me where you are going?' 'R—r—r—r!' I began to be a little mad, and had a transcendent mind to shoot him; but somehow or other I held back, until I came up and took hold of his shoulder, and shook him like a bottle of bitters; when I wish I may be goy blamed if he didn't spring up higher than the top of the cane-brake, *and* give a great whoop, *and* scamper off like a flash of lightning. I followed the trail he made; it led me down to the river. Then I knew where I was, *and* I was so pleased with the cretur for showing me the way, that, somehow or other kindly, I couldn't harm him, and he got off clear that time, anyhow."

"I'm glad of that," said Virginia; "it would have been barbarous to hurt the poor creature."

"I don't know," returned the other; "for it turned out he was a crazy Ingen, that was let run

about by his tribe, because these people have a sort of superstitious respect for such characters. I afterwards heard he got into a white station when the men were away, and murdered two or three women and children. I only wish I had known what was to happen, and may I be eternally condemned to live in a big city like Lexington if I wouldn't have winged him, if he had been as mad as a buffalo bull that has had a rifle-ball flattened against his forehead."

No one but Virginia noticed that during the latter part of this story Rainsford laboured under a suppressed agitation, which he strove to conceal with all his might. But when Bushfield came to the catastrophe, the arm which the young man had thrown over the back of her chair trembled so violently as to communicate to it a tremulous motion, which thrilled to her very heart. As if by a violent effort, he rose, and, scarcely bidding good night, departed abruptly. That night Virginia lay for hours thinking of the tale of Mrs. Judith Paddock, and sometimes coming to a conclusion which alternately thrilled her with a dry and parching horror, or wetted her pillow with tears.

CHAPTER XX.

"How sweet in the woodlands."

The morning opened brightly, and the sun shone with a newly-awakened warmth that indicated the gradual approaches of spring. Its balmy influence chased away the dark shadows which the midnight fancy conjures up in silence and obscurity, and the vague horrors which had beset the pillow of Virginia vanished like spectres at the dawn of day. Few that have traced the map of their own minds but must have been struck with the different views and feelings which govern the different periods of the day, and remarked how often the decisions of the pillow are reversed by the hurry, the bustle, the excitements, and temptations of the busy, sprightly morning. Imagination is the queen of darkness; night the season of her despotism. But daylight, by presenting a thousand objects to the eye, the hearing, and the touch, restores the empire of the senses, and, from being the sport of fancy, we become the slaves of realities.

Rainsford did not make his appearance at the house of Colonel Dangerfield for several days after his abrupt exit as recorded in the last chapter. He accompanied Bushfield on a visit to his hermitage, under pretence of taking lessons in hunting, but in reality partly to escape the prying curiosity, the sociable visits of Mrs. Judith, and partly from the apprehensive timidity of his mind,

which suggested to him that he had made himself conspicuous by his emotions on the occasion to which we have before alluded.

The habitation of this Indian white man, as the savages called him, was simply a log cabin, the appurtenances of which were barely sufficient for the purposes of eating and sleeping. The forest supplied him with food, such as is considered the most delicate among the disciples of luxury; the skins of the deer and the bear furnished him with bed and clothing; his rifle was his purse; his powder and shot his ready cash; for they afforded him the medium of exchange for every thing which they did not themselves enable him to procure in the surrounding forest. Bushfield never rode, it made him so tired, he said; and Rainsford was heartily fatigued when they came upon the solitary cabin, after scouring the woods in their way. His companion was frequently obliged to wait for him, and very often he would have been inevitably lost in the mazes of the trackless wild, had not the Indian whoop of his companion served to recall him from his wanderings. He had been induced to take a rifle with him, but sorely repented his temerity, for its weight wearied him at length almost beyond endurance; besides, though they met plenty of game, it so happened that Rainsford always missed, while the other never failed. No man likes to be outdone, even in what he does not value himself upon; and no man, perhaps, cordially respects another who is totally ignorant of that in which he himself excels. Bushfield sometimes got a little out of patience with Rainsford, and Rainsford often envied Bushfield his skill in the rifle. In the crowded city such an accomplishment would have been

beneath his attention, but in the forest it was held the standard of manhood.

"Stranger," said Bushfield, on occasion of the other missing a squirrel which was crouching at the summit of a tree of moderate height, and which had been resigned to him as an easy shot; "stranger, I reckon you haven't had the advantage of being raised in the woods, anyhow; why, I could have brought down that squirrel with both eyes shut, let alone one."

"No; I had the misfortune to be brought up in a city, where nobody carries a gun, except the militia."

"Nobody carry a gun! why, what do they carry then, a dirk?"

"No; the young gentlemen sometimes carry a switch about as thick as my little finger."

"A switch! why, what would they do now, supposing they were to come right face to face with a bear or an Ingen? what a mighty figure they'd cut."

"Yes; but there are neither bears nor Indians to fear."

"Sure that's true enough; for I remember when I went home to North Carolina, to see the old place, I'll be shot if there wasn't a little varmint of a town built right smack on the spot that used to be one of the best deer stations in the whole country. I couldn't stand that, no, that was too bad, so I cut a stick and made tracks, and came back to my old range; but they won't let a feller alone where he has plenty of elbow-room, and I begin to think of leaving here soon, and carrying a trail across the Mississippi, anyhow."

"Why so?"

"Why, I'll tell you, stranger. It's getting too dense hereabouts."

"Dense?"

"Yes; the people are getting too close together, they han't elbow-room. Why, do you know there's a feller has had the impudence to locate himself over yonder, within three miles of me. I saw the smoke of his chimney the other morning, and heard a strange dog bark; so I tracked the feller, and put it to him if he wasn't ashamed to come and disturb a man in this unneighbourly manner. Bym-by, says I to him, a man won't have room to turn round here without hitting somebody's elbow, and the upshot of the business is, that either you or I must cut a stick and quit this hunting-ground, or I'll see if I can't make you, anyhow."

"Well, and did he cut a stick?"

"Not he, the rantanckerous squatter! he said he had as good a right there as any bear or wolf that ever broke bread; as good as I had, that have been in possession here ever since old Rogers Clarke licked the Ingens so beautifully. I'm a considerable old feller now, and followed close on the trail of old Boone, and it's a mighty pretty piece of nonsense if I han't a right to the country about here, as much as I can throw a stick at; and I wish I may be dragged head foremost through a thorn-bush, if this interloper sha'n't clear out pretty considerably in a hurry, or I'll be down upon him like all wrath, anyhow. I'd as good a mind as I ever had to shoot a wild deer, to have a fight with him off the reel, and settle the right of soil at once; but then I bethought myself he might listen to reason some other time,

and so I told him I'd give him till next month to make tracks, or make up his mind to get a most almighty licking, if nothing else. But whoop!" cried he, in a wild voice, that rung through the woods, and roused the inmates of a rude cabin, consisting of a litter of puppies and an old black woman, with hair as white as snow, who came out to welcome their master.

"Well, here we are, old Snowball," cried Bushfield, who seemed delighted to get home; "here we are, and I don't think there's many such places as this betwixt here and kingdom come. Come in, come in, stranger, you're right welcome; but there's no use in telling a man what everybody knows, anyhow."

Old Mammy Phillis,—that was the pastoral name of Bushfield's housekeeper,—was one of those unaccountable creatures, as he called her, who, with the appearance of age and decrepitude, are capable of undergoing great labour and fatigue. Like old ricketty machines, they seem to keep going from the mere force of habit, long after the parts which compose them are dislocated or worn out.

"Come, come, mammy, stir these old stumps of yours, and get us something to eat; I'm as hungry as a whole team of horses. What have you got to treat us with, hey?"

"Sum deer meat, massa."

"Well, cook us a steak, in less than no time. That old sinner is the plague of my life," continued Bushfield, "I wish I'd bin swamped in the Mississippi before I was fool enough to bring her here. I find there's no such thing as being one's own master as long as a man has any company about him. He's like a nail in a piece of timber;

he can't move one way nor t'other, and there he sticks as straight as a pine-tree, till he grows rusty and drops out. I never could find out how you manage to live without doing just what you like and going where you please, anyhow. For my part, stranger, I can't fetch my breath anywhere except in all out-doors, and had sooner lay down on a bed of leaves with a sky blanket, than sleep on one of your hard feather-beds, that pretty nigh break a man's bones. I wish I may be hoppled all my life to come, if I didn't once get within a huckleberry of being smothered to death in one of them beds with curtains all round 'em. Catch me there agin, and I'll give you leave to curry-comb me, anyhow. How under the sun do you make out to live in such a queer way, stranger?"

"Custom familiarizes us, and then the pleasures of society make amends for the want of perfect freedom of action."

"Society! I'd as soon think of getting used to be handcuffed, or hoppled, as we do our horses to keep 'em from straying away in the woods. There's nothing I ever did in all my life that I wish the d—l had me so much for doing, as bringing that old Snowball home here; for somehow or other, I've never rightly had my own way since she came. The cretur is always in my way, and sometimes I catch her great goggle eyes set upon me, so that I seem tied fast to my seat, and altogether am as good as a nigger myself."

"Well, but I suppose you have your own way for all that?"

"Have my own way! what d'ye take me for, stranger? wasn't I born, no, not born, but raised in Old Kentuck; and d'ye think I wouldn't have

my way and my say, if an earthquake stood on one side and a flash of lightning on the other, and crossed their arms right before me, as much as to say, stand where you are? But a man may have his own way, and yet somehow or other not do just as he pleases after all."

"I don't see exactly how."

"No? well then, I'll split the log for you. See here now, what I call having my own way, is doing a thing in spite of what other people may say or do to prevent me; and what I call doing as I please, is to have nobody to come about me and put on their wise airs, and tell me I'd better not, or I shall repent, or I'd wish some day or other I'd took their advice; and worry and fret a feller's soul into a knot-hole, so that when he does take his own way at last, he wabbles about like a broad-horn in an eddy, instead of shooting right straight ahead like all nature, and after all, as I said before, has no pleasure in having his own way. There's nothing on the face of the earth I hate so much as advice."

"And would you reject the advice of a friend?"

"Friend! I don't know what friend means; except somehow I think I might be wrought upon to stop a bullet before Colonel Dangerfield. He's a man now that I would allow to advise me without knocking him down; I liked him from the first hour I saw him, and if I must tell the bare truth, I do believe it was because he always took my advice in coming down the Ohio, and locating his settlement and all that, instead of making believe he knew better than I; I can't stand that, no, no, I can't stand that, anyhow. I'd blow any other man as high as the Alleghanies, if he was to go to advise me. But as I was say-

ing—I wonder what keeps the old cretur so long with the steaks?—as I was saying, it was a blue day when I first put this old rotten tree across my path."

"How came you to commit such an error?"

"Why, I'll tell you how it was. I had lived here I don't know how many years, for it's no matter to me to count the scores of winters and summers, and springs and falls; but I was prehaps, stranger, the most almightiest happiest feller that ever hunted a buffalo. The cretures came sometimes and looked into my door, the deer would hardly get out of my way, and the bears and wolves came growling and howling round the house at night so beautifully—O! if you only had an idea of the splendid independence of living in the woods fifteen or twenty miles from anybody, you'd never be happy anywhere else, I'll be goy blamed if you would. Only think, stranger, of my being all alone, not a soul to lay so much as a straw in my way, to look at me, or to talk to me, or give me advice, or watch which way I was going, or inquire what I was going to do,—O, it was splendid! If I wanted any thing to eat, instead of working for it like a nigger, I took my rifle and shot a deer or a wild turkey, for they were so thick you couldn't miss them; if I wanted amusement, I went into the woods, and had a hunt after the bears and wolves, who sometimes made battle and came pretty nigh treeing me; it was transcendent, anyhow. If I wanted a rousing fire, I went just outside the door and cut down a tree, which fell right under the window, and I had no trouble to *tote* it half a mile. I only wish you may one day be as happy as I was, but that's quite beyond the Rocky

Mountains, for the Gar-broth people are cluttering up the country hereabouts so fast, that no man will be able to do as he pleases much longer. Well, as the Old Boy would have it, the emigration came this way and the game went that, so I was obliged to stay out sometimes all night in the winter to kill a deer, and I got the rheumatism. I was pretty considerably nigh starving, for all I could do was to crawl to the door, and shoot a squirrel or a woodpecker; it's mighty bad living on squirrels and woodpeckers. Well, when I got better, I thought I would somehow go and buy a smart chance of a nigger boy to live with me, and help along in case I should get the rheumatism again, for it's like a wolf, it will be coming back where it has had the taste of blood. But then I had not money enough for this, for I always hated to have more than I wanted, and so I took old Phillis, whose master gave her to me for nothing, and a bad bargain I have had of her, anyhow; for as I said before she takes away all the pleasure of having my own way, which is almost as bad as not having my own way at all. Not that she asks any questions, about where I am going or when I shall come back, but she looks so plaguy curious that I'll be goy blamed if it don't sometimes make me feel as if I wasn't my own master. But here comes the old sinner; she hangs fire like a rusty rifle, but always goes off at last."

And sure enough, the savoury odour of the venison steaks, which far transcends any thing that Jupiter ever snuffed up from pagan altars, smote the olfactory nerves of Bushfield with such a triumphant relish as to mollify his anger, and allay his impatience, of this new species of petticoat gov-

ernment; and the two sat down to the banquet with as good an appetite as ever fell to the lot of ancient epicuré, or modern sojourner in that great cook-shop of the civilized world yclept Paris.

CHAPTER XXI.

A most knowing wife, and a most discreet husband.

THE foregoing was one of the longest talks that Bushfield probably ever held in the whole course of his life, a large portion of which had been spent in solitude. He might be called a hermit of a rare species. One who loved to be alone, not for the purposes of pious abstraction, or uninterrupted repose, but that he might indulge his own active, unrestrained love of liberty without interruption. There had been days, nay years of his life, in which he scarcely spoke to a human being; and he had thus acquired a habit of taciturnity which could with difficulty be overcome, except when among those he liked, or animated by the subject of the happiness of his peculiar mode of life. He lived, for the most part, with his dog and his gun; and the encounter with a fellow-creature in the woods he ranged, had the same effect on him that the presence of a wild beast in a populous city has on the peaceable citizens. It was an intrusion, and excited a strong disposition to hunt the outlaw. He was not by any means devoid of excitement in his solitary abode, for hunting had become a habit, a passion; and never did the vainest old soldier relate his exploits in the field with a higher relish of enthusiasm than did our sturdy backwoodsman detail his triumphs over the wild animals that peopled his woodland domain. In doing this, he,

like the war-worn veteran aforesaid, was prone to make inroads upon the regions of the imagination, insomuch that some of his stories actually bordered on the marvellous.

Rainsford accompanied him in one or two of his enormous peregrinations, which generally lasted all day, and would have consumed the night too, had he not protested against sleeping in the open air, though Bushfield swore, "like all wrath," that it was the greatest luxury in the world. But two men of such dissimilar habits seldom covet the society of each other, or form any permanent friendship. Each secretly despises his companion. It is only in the crowded haunts, and among the peaceful occupations of mankind, that the superiority of education, intellectual acquirements, and gentlemanly accomplishments, are highly valued; and it is only on the exposed frontiers of life, in the midst of perils and privations, that hardy daring, and the capacity to endure fatigue, are estimated at their proper value.

Rainsford gave out the third day, and his host voluntarily, and indeed necessarily, accompanied him home to show the track through the woods.

"Stranger," said he, "you've had a mighty poor sort of a raising, I should reckon. Why, you're no more fit for the woods than a wild turkey is for a justice of peace. What would you do now if you had to turn out every day and shoot your dinner, or go without it, or fight a dozen Indians at a time, or find your way through the woods two or three hundred miles, without a path, and nothing to eat but an old pair of moccasins? I wish I may be shot if I don't think some of our old Kentucky women would cut a better figure than you do here."

The last part of this speech grated harshly on the feelings of Rainsford.

"And what would you do," replied he, "if you were obliged to live in a city, change your linen twice a day, and your coat three times; gallant the ladies; attend tea-parties; dance the waltz; and go through all the ceremonies of good breeding? 'Faith, I think you'd cut rather a more ridiculous figure than I do here in the woods. The ladies would all run away from such a savage, and the men laugh at you."

"Would they! If they attempted to follow such a track as that, I'd soon tree them. If I didn't make 'em shut their pans quicker than a flash of lightning, I hope I may be civilized to-morrow, as you call it. I don't much mind being shot at, nor should I care a great deal about running the gauntlet Ingen fashion, because I'm used to that. But let me give you one piece of advice stranger, never laugh at a feller in a hunting-shirt, or you'll be likely to get a most almighty licking. You'll be down as quick as I can dodge an Ingen, and that's quicker than wink, anyhow."

The return of Rainsford was welcomed by Virginia with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain; by Mrs. Judith with most extraordinary marks of satisfaction; and by Master Zeno with wonderful cordiality. Since his departure Mrs. Judith had laboured under a fit of mortal ennui, seeing she had nobody to watch, and her life became as it were a dead blank, for want of the excitement of curiosity. There was not a secret stirring in the whole village of Dangerfieldville. Master Zeno had a still better reason for hailing

the return of his guest; it was now almost time to begin his preparations for the Daily, and he took an early opportunity of jogging Mr. Rainsford's memory.

"Well, well, sir" rubbing his hands; "I've kept the secret."

"What secret?"

"Why—why, you know, the secret you told—I mean that I happened, by the merest accident in the world to overhear in the woods. The secret that you are—hem!—"

A deep paleness passed over the face of the young man; and it was not unnoticed by Master Zeno, who had an eye and an ear like the man in the fairy tale; he could see through a mountain, and hear the grass grow when a secret was in the way.

"Well," and he vainly essayed a melancholy smile. "Well, you have kept your word, you say, and I will keep mine. Make out an estimate of the cost of establishing a paper."

"A daily, sir?"

"Ay, a daily, if you wish. I will give you an order on a merchant, who has money of mine in his hands, at Pittsburg. And you can very likely procure all the materials you want at that place."

"Here it is, sir, here's the estimate. I've had it ready ever since I overheard, by the merest accident in the world, you were—hem. What a fortunate man I am!"

"Very," said the other, dryly, and he went and wrote, and returned with an order for the money required.

"I'm afraid I'm robbing you, sir," said Master Zeno, after putting up the draft snugly in an old leather convenience called a pocket-book. "But

you may calculate on me to a certainty. I'll keep your secret, sir; and if anybody dares to accuse you of being a—hem—I'll attack them in my Daily, in such a style they'll be glad to be quiet. But really, sir, I'm afraid I'm robbing you."

"No, not in the least. I am in possession of more than I want; far more than I shall ever live to use. It is no pleasure to me to be rich, for when I think of the manner in which I became so, I loathe the very name of money. I would willingly be made a public example; that my secret should be exposed to the world, so I could bring back to life, and its best gift, those to whom it once belonged, and restore all I have received, to its owners. You are welcome to the money, so you only make a good use of it."

"I will enlighten the universe," said Zeno; and they parted just at the moment Mrs. Judith had applied her ear to the keyhole, or rather to a knothole, for other there was none.

She heard nothing, save the latter part of the last speech of Rainsford, about being made a public example—of restoring the money to those to whom it once belonged; and above all, the never to be forgotten words; "Take the money, so you only make a good use of it." And she resolved within her secret soul to take special care that this last injunction was complied with.

Master Paddock remained on the exact spot where he had been left by Rainsford, cogitating on the full and free confession he had just heard from that wicked, yet inconsiderate youth, as he now felt satisfied he was. "'To *those* to whom it once belonged.' These were his very words. Then he must have robbed and murdered at least *two* persons! What a diabolical young sinner!

I wish I had made him pay double for keeping his secret. But never mind, I'll get more out of him, I warrant. And when I've got all I can, why I'll quiet my conscience by getting the young rascal hanged."

Having come to this righteous conclusion, he turned round, and turning saw the head of Holofernes within what is called striking distance, for it certainly struck him dumb.

"My dear," quoth the enchanted head, "how much money did Mr. Rainsford give you to keep his secret?"

"Pooh! What money? what secret?"

"Ah! heigho!—what a wicked world this is. Now, who'd have thought such a nice young man was a—"

"A what?"

"Hem—ah!—heigho!—it's a very scandalous world. I sometimes almost wish I was out of it. But come now, tell me how much money you got for keeping the secret; now do, Zeno!" and she fawned on him like a roaring lioness.

"Pooh! pooh!—nonsense. I've got no money—how should you know any thing about it?"

"Why, then, if you must know, I'll tell you. I happened to be in the next room, and I happened to hear every thing you said, and I know all about it. There now, are you satisfied? Heigho! what a wicked world we live in!"

"Why then, if you know all, I may as well tell you, I suppose."

"Yes, yes—do, do, do—oh!" and she discovered such an itching curiosity, that the shrewd Zeno was convinced she pretended to know more than she really did; whereupon, he coolly replied,—

"But now I think of it, if you *do* really know

all, there is no occasion to waste time in telling you." And so saying, he walked out of the room with the air of a man having money in his pocket, which, we presume, is what is called the air noble.

Had it not been for one single resource, Mrs. Judith would have undoubtedly burst the boiler of her curiosity, and exploded into scalding steam instead of tears. People who live in the great world, surrounded by excitements of a thousand various kinds, and with a thousand resources for passing away the time, can form no idea of the biting curiosity of a real full-blooded village gossip, who, having little employment at home, has no other resource for passing the idle hours than prying into the affairs of her neighbours. It becomes, not only a passion, but the master passion of the soul, and swallows up all the others, as the rod of—no, hang it! that's too musty—as the mighty Mississippi swallows up a hundred mighty streams.

Next to the pleasure of gaining a secret, that of telling it is held the most delectable; nay, some who have investigated this matter more deeply are inclined to the opinion that the after-pleasure of telling, like the dessert of a modern lady's dinner, is the better part of the feast. However this may be, there is no doubt in our minds that Mrs. Judith Paddock would have met with a catastrophe, had she not forthwith solaced her disappointment at failing to get at the whole secret by communicating the portion she did know, to the first person she could get to listen to it, which unfortunately happened to be Miss Virginia Dangerfield. She sought that young maiden, who, in truth, could scarcely bear the sight of her since the communication of this being such a wicked

world, such a scandalous world. She never saw her coming across the way without feeling a shivering presentiment of some unwelcome news; but such is the strange inconsistency of human nature, that she still would linger and listen, though perhaps every word was a dagger to her heart. There is a sort of supernatural fascination in fear, and, above all, in horrible realities. The gentlest, tenderest portion of the human race, that portion whose charity is untiring, whose pity never dies—need I name woman?—which is the most fearful, the most apprehensive, the most delicate, dwells with most intense interest, and lingers most devotedly over the page where horrors are accumulated on horrors, and wickedness is displayed in the most atrocious colours of utter abandonment. We see decent women thronging from all parts of the country to witness the last agonies of a dying villain who falls a merited sacrifice to the sanctity of the laws and the safety of society; not because they are cruel, but that they are attracted by the grateful horrors of the scene, fascinated by the witchcraft of the terrible. All our readers will probably recollect occasions when some horribly disgusting or exquisitely painful exhibition of the vices or infirmities of human nature in its lowest stage of degradation and misery has suddenly presented itself. They have turned away in thrilling horror as they passed; yet, strange to tell, curiosity, or rather the fascination of the terrible, has wrested from them by force a single glance, and that glance has impressed the scene so keenly on the imagination, as to haunt it by day and appear as a spectre by night for a long while afterwards.

It was thus with Virginia, who, while she

shrunk with averted mind from the mere idea of the possibility of the suspicions of Mrs. Judith being true, was yet irresistibly impelled to listen to every new surmise and every questionable circumstance that, while it increased her doubts, added to her sufferings. Already had that struggle between the heart and the reason commenced in her mind, to which it falls to the lot of so many gentle beings either to yield unresisting victims, or, if victors, to conquer at the price of the loss of all that vivacity of hope, that thrilling sense of pleasure, which makes us look up from the dark valley of the shadow of old age with a long, lingering, wishful eye, at the sunshiny region of youth, from which we have imperceptibly slidden for ever.

To such croaking ravens as Mrs. Judith, there is nothing so grateful as to excite surprise, wonder, pleasure, pain, any striking or violent emotion; it is all one to them, provided they can excite something. Indifference gives them the fidgets irretrievably. Mrs. Judith had for this reason particular pleasure in telling Virginia any thing which was calculated to increase her suspicions of Rainsford, for she saw it created the most intense and painful interest. She began, as usual, with the eternal gossip cant of the wickedness of this world, the propensity to scandal, &c. &c., and finally disclosed, not only what she had heard, but what she imagined of what she had not heard of the conversation between Rainsford and Master Zeno, not by any means omitting the *large* sum of money the former had given her husband *to keep his secret.* "If it is not a wicked and abominable secret, why should he bribe my Zeno to

keep it? Ah! heigho! what a wicked world, what a scandalous world we live in?"

Poor Virginia! what a situation was thine, and what a struggle hadst thou to go through in order to hide, if possible, in the folds of thine innocent heart the poisonous asp that lay coiled there instilling his deadly poisons!

"You don't seem well somehow, Miss Phiginny," said this mischievous incendiary, after sitting in simpering hypocritical sympathy, watching the war of feelings reflected in the changeful countenance of the young maiden; "you don't seem well. Let me advise you to take some spring physic—some yerbs; do now, dear Miss Phiginny. Ah! heigho! this *is* a wicked, a scandalous world!" and the woman departed to watch, but not to pray.

Mrs. Dangerfield came in a few minutes after, and found Virginia sitting still, and white as a statue, unconscious of existence. She started as her mother entered, and, throwing her arms about her neck, melted into a quiet shower of tears.

"My dear Virginia, what is the matter with you?"

"I don't know; I cannot tell you now, my dear mother; but in a little while, as soon as I know more, you shall know all."

"In your own good time, my daughter; but remember, there are no sorrows, no perplexities, no wishes, no disappointments which a virtuous and obedient daughter ought to keep long from the ear of a kind, affectionate mother."

"You shall know all; I promise you shall know all as soon as I know it myself."

"I am content, dear Virginia; and now cheer

up, for I see Mr. Rainsford has returned from his visit to Bushfield, and is crossing over this way."

The young lady retired for a few minutes, and met Rainsford with an effort to be cheerful.

CHAPTER XXII.

Proving that the chief use of words is to mar our meaning.

The meeting between Virginia and Rainsford was awkward and embarrassing. Each was conscious of possessing a secret, and each equally apprehensive of betraying it to the other. Virginia could not but perceive that Rainsford displayed a degree of shyness which she suspected arose from his recollection of the emotion he had betrayed at hearing the story of the mad Indian; while Rainsford thought he perceived in her countenance an expression half tender, half fearful, and in her eyes the traces of tears. She forced herself to question him as to the incidents of his visit to Bushfield; he prosed away on the subject till both were heartily tired; and, in short, they talked of every thing except the subject which really occupied their minds.

But they say murder will out at last; and however we may play about a subject of deep interest for a while, like a moth round the candle, we are pretty certain to singe our wings with it in the end. The exquisite pain she had endured under the pressure of the growing suspicion which in spite of herself still rankled in her heart, had brought her to the conviction it was necessary to her future peace that his guilt or innocence should be established. If the former, she had

made up her mind to warn him to leave the place for ever, and to forget, if possible, every feeling towards him but that of gratitude; and if the latter, it was due to his honour, as well as to her own happiness, that he should have an opportunity of establishing it beyond doubt or contradiction. But to put the direct question to a man to whom she was under so deep an obligation, and with whom she was associating almost every day on terms of intimacy, required a hardihood of which she had at no period been mistress. Several times she essayed to touch the subject, but as often her heart failed her; and after talking themselves weary about nothing, a dead, oppressive silence ensued. Chance, however, at length brought them to the subject nearest her heart. Rainsford had roused himself to observe, that as the spring was approaching, he intended soon to take possession of his house, and begin his new settlement.

"You will be very solitary; but perhaps the precepts and example of Mr. Bushfield have made you in love with the independence of living alone?"

"No," replied the young man; "loneliness has no charms for me. I hate a crowd as much as I fear—I mean dislike being alone. But I confess there is one thing which reconciles me in some degree to leaving the society of my friends, and that is, the idea of escaping the eternal inquisition of Mrs. Judith Paddock. I never met with so troublesome a woman in my life."

"Why, she certainly is the gossip of the village."

"Yes, and so fond of getting at the secrets of other people, only that she may keep them from other people. I saw her leave this house a few minutes ago brimful of something. I hope you

have not trusted her with any of *your* secrets," said he, smiling.

"No!" and her heart palpitated as she proceeded; "no, but she intrusted me with the secret of another."

Rainsford gave a slight start; and Virginia, who forced herself to look him full in the eye, fancied she saw an increase of paleness in a face that was always pale. The ice being broken, she nerved herself for the crisis, as all minds of a higher order do when once it has arrived.

"She told me something that deeply concerns you and, I will confess it, me also; for I cannot be indifferent to the character and actions of the man to whom I am so deeply obliged."

"Me? What *can* she say, what *can* she know of me? I assure you, Miss Dangerfield, she *can* know nothing of me. I have never made her my confidant."

"But confidence is not always necessary in these cases. An involuntary look; a sudden start; an indiscreet word; a habit of talking to one's self; a thousand little indications of which we are not aware, or cannot restrain, are the agents by which guilt, or misery, let out their deep buried secrets." The strong feeling which had taken possession of the soul of the young maiden, communicated firmness to her nerves, and enabled her to look Rainsford in the face during this speech, with a firm, yet gentle melancholy expression. With a thrilling pang she saw him wince and quiver with emotion, as thus she touched the string whose music was the howl of the demon that beset his steps by day and by night. He mastered his feelings however; and

collecting all the energies of despair, asked in a firm manly tone for further explanation.

"You ought to know it; and I and my family at least, ought to know if what Mrs. Paddock says she has heard, and seen, and *suspects*, is true or false."

"What—what has she heard? what has she seen? and what does she *suspect?*" said the young man, almost furiously.

"I—I—cannot—yes! I *will* tell you—what I will not deny, has almost—has rendered it absolutely necessary, if it be true, that you—that we should never meet again; that you should quit this place and never return."

"Well, let me hear it, Virginia," replied he, in a hoarse voice; and leaning back in his chair he awaited what was to follow, with the feelings of one whose conscience has already whispered the secret.

Virginia, then, with a kind solemnity, detailed to him the substance of the two confidential communications of Mrs. Judith, at the same time refraining from making any comments, or drawing any conclusions. It was impossible; it was not in her heart; and if it had been, it was not in her tongue to hint at the seeming evident conclusion, arising from such extraordinary emotion, and such a bribe offered for secrecy.

As she proceeded, the feelings of Rainsford became more apparent; he trembled; he gasped for breath; he clasped his hands, and finally covered his face and wept aloud, as if his heart was breaking. The agitation of Virginia was almost equal to his own, and she kept him company in silent tears. At length recovering herself she put the question directly.

"Is the tale of Mrs. Paddock true?"

"It is—but—"

"Then let us never see each other more. I cannot betray you. But you must leave this place for ever."

"But, Virginia! Miss Dangerfield—let me explain—"

"I want no explanations; nothing you can say will remove or soften the dreadful feelings your presence now inspires. Leave me—I forgive you. I—I pity you."

"But, dear Virginia—"

"Dear Virginia! How dare a wretch like you apply that epithet to a virtuous woman?"

"I am a wretch; the veriest of all wretches that ever crawled on the earth, and cursed the hour he was born. But my misfortune ought not to deprive me of all sympathy. God knows I want it."

"Misfortune!" cried she, contemptuously.

"*I* at least cannot help what I am; it was, or it will be the work of fate; the curse of inheritance."

"The work of fate!" cried Virginia, passionately. "Yes! this is the blasphemous cant of every wretched being, who thus attempts to fasten the temptations of Satan on the dispensations of Heaven, and vindicate himself by accusing his God. Go, go—leave me, and for ever, for the more you attempt to extenuate, the more I loathe you. May Heaven forgive me for saying so to the saviour of my life!"

"Well, madam, I *will* go," said he, proudly. "I will try to forget you: but if I cannot, I will at least endeavour to remember you only as one

who is an exception to the rest of her gentle sex, in being without pity."

"Pity! is not the tale of Mrs. Paddock true?"

"It is; I cannot deny it."

"Then, why are you here, sir?"

"I am gone, madam."

"Miserable, hardened wretch!" exclaimed Virginia, as he shut the door and departed, with the insolent air of an injured man.

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